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THE ROMAN NIGHTS

AT

THE TOMB

OF

THE SCIPIOS.

Translated from the Italian of Verri

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.,

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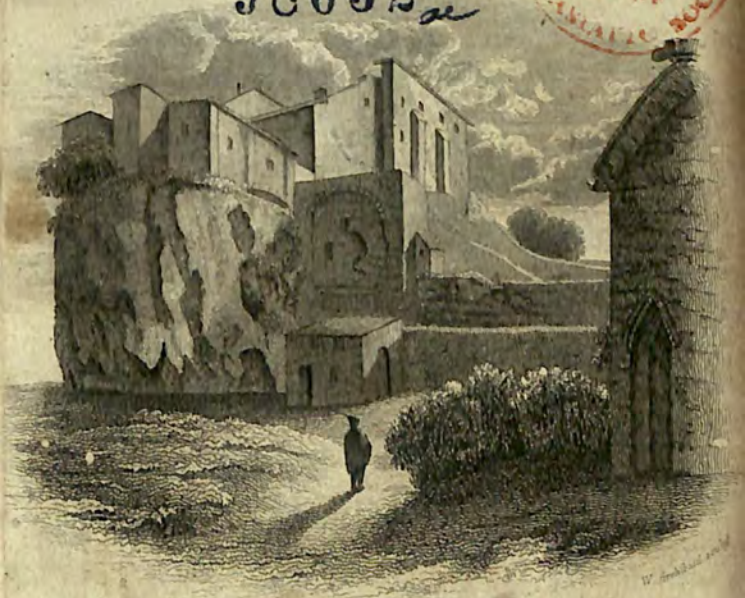

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THE

ROMAN NIGHTS

AT THE

TOMB OF THE SCIPIOS.

NIGHT FOURTH.

INTRODUCTION.

Now, after the many nights I had successively passed watching in the dusky recesses of the earth, and amidst these, by times, wondrous, agreeable, or tremendous apparitions, in listening to their ancient majestic language, their mighty disputes, and commanding reasonings, I felt my mind giving way as it were beneath a load of sorrowful feelings.

Because, although I wished exceedingly to communicate to some other person so wonderful an event, yet the dread of being accused either of

credulity or falsehood kept me silent. Then, again, I was disturbed by the strong inclination I felt to converse with these shades, who had hitherto appeared so indifferent about me; and although at times I had been on the very point of modestly proposing some question, yet reverence and amazement had always checked my words when, upon my very lips. And if, at length conquering my timidity, I perchance had commenced a speech, Tullius suddenly, by extending his hand in an authoritative manner, had imposed silence on me, and I had submissively obeyed. At length I resolved, if these spectres should again appear, to show myself to them no longer a timid mortal, but daring, and truly deserving of communing with the lofty-minded Quirites.

Wherefore, at the usual hour which was friendly to the ghosts, I arrived at the tombs, and groping before me with my hands, approached with doubtful steps along the dark avenues. After I had entered, and from passing my hands over the tombs had recognized the spot, I stood leaning against a sarcophagus, attentively expecting the approach of new miracles. Thus I remained, I know not how long, although it appear-

ed to me to be several tedious hours, measuring them probably by my anxiety. At length I had almost despaired of again beholding the spirits, as being now engulfed in the ocean of eternity.

When, on a sudden, a vivid flash of light rendered these recesses visible; but my eyes were once more veiled in darkness. Then the ghosts appeared to rise very slowly and sorrowfully from the tombs, as when amongst us people assemble together in a spot where some accident had lately happened:—I could not exactly comprehend this their new commotion.

I now perceived that the benevolent Tullius stood by my side, to whom I said:—"What are they afraid of?"

And he answered:—"To them the place appears to have been contaminated by the spectre of the parricide, and they dread lest they should by chance encounter him."

But nevertheless they began assembling together in the usual way; and as soon as I saw that a great number had arisen, courageously advancing, I entered into the midst of them. They, however, although incorporeal, seemed to avoid coming into contact with me; and clearing the

way wherever I approached, they all kept regarding me with various looks of wonder. To me it seemed as if I were passing through an early morning's mist; because, like vapour, they opposed no obstacle whatever to my steps. In the meanwhile, I tacitly cast my eyes around, never wearied of beholding the various countenances of the women and children, senators and warriors, and common people, each clad in the dresses adapted to their various orders. At length, when I had in a degree satisfied the first impulses of my curiosity, and acquired courage from the habit of beholding them, I said, in a loud voice:—

"O wonderful Quirites! aware how noble-minded ye have ever been to whomsoever implored your clemency, now I beseech you to show it towards me, who, although still enveloped in the frailty of flesh, have come hither, and remain an admirer of your conferences; having descended into your tombs to bear you company—departed spirits as ye are. For as soon as I had learnt from history the greatness of your works, I was ever tormented by a vain wish to have lived along with you, and to join you indeed in a new state of existence. Both which longings only your-

selves can now possibly forgive,—for amongst the living they would have been so much condemned, that I have constantly concealed them. Now, however, destiny granteth me neither one nor the other, because both are impossible; but at least do ye condescend, in this spot, where so many of your valiant bodies are laid low, consumed by inexorable death, and the perpetual fame of your deeds remains, to return again, veiled in your most pure and exalted substance. And I, although an impure intellect, still clad in my short-lived mortal envelope, and prevented from soaring to your celestial speculations, by this my incumbrance of material body,—yet by these my exalted aspirings, and all those daring desires usually unknown to mortals, which bring me hither, I beseech you to show yourselves, as you formerly were, friendly and liberal."

The spectres appeared to listen with due attention; and, by degrees, as I was addressing them, their countenances seemed to brighten up, and they appeared to become disposed to grant my request. And as soon as I had ceased, one of them commenced:—

"Gallant mortal, well dost thou deserve that

none of us should offend thee, but, on the contrary, should even feel grateful to thee for so remarkable a wish, which it seems thou hast so long and secretly felt, and now at length satisfied. Because, now thou art here in life, free and uninjured, and conversest with us Quirites, who, as thou seest, are equally ready to commune with thee, in as far as is permitted to us by the severe laws of this kingdom of death. But as we are now, for the first time, happily met together in congress, by a lucky accident, we are, as thou mayest believe, anxious beyond all things to converse amongst ourselves; because, after so long an exile in the desert realms of darkness, each individual here again meets with either a father, or consort, or son, or brother, or relation, or friend,—and, lastly, all of us, that which surpasses all other appellations—a fellow-citizen."

Whilst he thus kindly spoke, the surrounding ghosts gazed at me, as at a traveller arrived from a far distant shore; and one of them, of a sedate appearance, asked me:—

"But say, now, what has happened here?" and at the same time stretching out his right

hand, he pointed with his finger to the earth above. And I made answer:—

"Innumerable and extraordinary revolutions of fortune, which I cannot describe in a suitable manner in my rustic eloquence."

At these words, the shades looked wistfully at each other, as if impelled by an anxious desire to gain tidings; and several, at the same time, running up, asked me:—

"Is there still remaining a single stone of our city? Is its memory overwhelmed, or does it yet exist? Is any trophy of it yet left floating upon the deluge of ages?" And I answered:—

"Rome still exists, immortal and honoured, and splendid even, but in another state, with another description of inhabitants, but still well deserving of your admiration."

Not so much perturbed were the Greeks assembled at the Isthmian games, who, after having fallen by conquest under the dominion of the Romans, at the proclamation the Consul Quintus Flaminius issued—a proclamation declaring them free—as were these ghosts at this grateful intelligence; seeing that, with various peals of joy, they suddenly filled these crypts, and then mutually

looking at each other, became mute, as if doubting whether they should believe in such intelligence.

" After a while, many again asked me, and although I repeated to them the same answer, yet as it was so wholly unexpected by them, they seemed glad at hearing it again and again. They even submissively implored me, in the most sacred terms, not to disturb the silent empire of death by any flattering deception. Wherefore, my mind being wounded by such disagreeable doubts, I said to Tullius, who stood by my side, " Do thou now employ thy eloquence in persuading thy Romans to come forth into the open air, and behold whether I have been deceiving them, or telling them the real truth ?"

At these words, Tullius becoming joyful, and seeming to shake off the squalid look of death, became like a living creature, and regarded me so steadily and closely, that methought I perceived the breathing of his words, whilst he said :—

" I have resolved again to behold, since it is so permitted by fate, the wonderful effects of exterminating time. But, ah me! perhaps thou

leadest me forth to fresh suffering. If Rome is still illustrious, as thou tellest us, sad is that decree by which we are banished from it. If it is dilapidated by time, and neglected by fortune, wherefore dost thou unthinkingly conduct me to weep over my native country?"

And I replied:—"I hope that thou wilt behold it again with less sorrow than thou apprehendest; although mixed with ruins, and in its appearance much changed, is thy Romulean city."

Then he asked me:—"Possibly the name remains?"

I replied:—"Not only the name, but a great portion of its ancient splendour, and the whole of its fame."

"Follow me," shouted Tullius to his Romans; and to me he said:—"Lead the way."

CONFERENCE FIRST.

The Author comes forth from the Sepulchre of the Scipios, and guides the Spectres to review their native Country; and, in the first place, the Palatine Hill.

I SALLIED forth then, having become the guide of the real Quirites, now strangers in their own country, exiled thence by the decrees of death. Tullius followed close behind me, and then the other numberless Spectres poured out into the upper air, bursting forth from the murky cavern, like a torrent into the sea. And behold, I went in front of this crowd, so marvellous, so silent, and so light, even as the vapours of the atmosphere; turning myself on the right towards the immortal city. The night was still; the moon's pale crescent alone shone forth in the

ample vault of Heaven, in which appeared the tremulous splendour of the stars, as being not quite vanquished by the scanty light of the minor planet. So that the darkness was in some degree subdued into a sort of twilight, like that of the morning, through which appeared, as if veiled in vapour, the vast ruins, the lofty temples, the splendid palaces, and melancholy-looking monuments. There was a degree of mystic solemnity in the air, as if conscious of these secret prodigies. A slight western breeze fanned the leaves, and the only sound which disturbed the dread repose was the song of the nightingale, and, at times, the screams of the screech owls from amidst the ruins.

Gladsome I went along the Appian Way, advancing by the acclivities of the Palatine Hill, and there looked back with complacency at perceiving myself followed by such an illustrious suite.

At this prospect Tullius stopt short, and the multitude, at the same time, all gazing in silence, I perceived the wonder expressed in their countenances at beholding this hill, their first and earliest settlement, setting out from which, they

had subsequently carried their victorious arms beyond the mountains of the Taurus and Pyrenees. The frowning ruins of that palace of their tyrants stood revealed, which the Roman people assembled in idle repose in the subjacent comitia, (then no longer the terror, but the sport of their monarchs,) had beheld, with stupid reverence, on the summit of the Palatine Hill. It was in that gilded abode, that those human tigers, the Neros, Caligulas, and Domitians, had vented their rage. And as there are no bounds to tyranny, so the whole of that hill, which had been large enough to contain the whole city in its origin, was found not sufficiently ample for their vast palace. Then there arose those lofty arches and immense walls overspread with lofty cypress trees.

The crowds of Spectres who had hitherto followed me submissively as the leader of their choice, upon reaching the foot of the hill, became agitated, for some unknown reason, and diffusing themselves abroad, like vapour in the air, flitted by different avenues, throughout these ample ruins.

Then I remained, attended only by Tullius,

and a few more, who being of superior rank, did not disturb themselves like the vulgar, but preserved a wonderful gravity, their souls being unmoved, and superior to fortune. I kept watching from below the movements of the dispersed multitude, as they were flitting through the cavities of the ruins, at one moment soaring up, then dipping down again, and appearing and disappearing like silvery mists, amongst the winding passages. Meantime, I dragged my earthly body pantingly along the grassy footpath, and having reached the summit of the hill whence I looked down upon the wide expanse of the wonderful city. Tullius turned round, and those who were with him, and after having stood for some time in a pensive attitude, leaning his chin upon his hand, exclaimed :—

"O aged Queen, what miraculous fate still preserves all thy beauties from the repeated injuries of time? Even yet thou art Rome."

While he thus spoke, the crowd, at a short distance from us, had assembled round a ghost who had just made his appearance. He was clad in a shining corslet, and an ornamented helmet, the crest of which waved in the wind; on his left

arm hang a shield, and with his right hand he bore a sturdy spear, which he brandished in a threatening manner. At his side hung a large sword. He was a tall and brawny Spectre, with a fine manly countenance; his chin covered with a rough shaggy beard; his eyes were of a prodigious lustre. He looked all around him with wonder, while a beam of moonlight was reflected back from his glittering armour. Tullius accosting him, said:—

"That thou art a bold and gallant warrior is evident from thy appearance; but who thou mayest be I know not; reveal to us thy name, and thy wishes."

The other warrior cast his eyes upon him, and shook his head scornfully, with a bitter smile. Then with his left hand he made a sign to the surrounding multitude that they should stand back.

Tullius, not offended by this repugnance, as being accustomed during his life to the tumults of the forum, with entreaties, mingled with words of authority, endeavoured to persuade the haughty Spirit to make known his awful sentiments. But he continued silent and immoveable, like a rock

in a storm, when at length striking down his quivering spear, he indignantly shouted :—

" Hence, ye traitors ! for this is my territory, thou perfidious race ; and here was I put to death by traitors."

Then was heard a sorrowful sound of submissive and mingled voices, which exclaimed :—

" O Romulus ! Quirinus, Father." And he with severity broke forth :—

" Yes, I am that same ; tremble, O ye conscript traitors, at the sight of me, sent amongst the shades below by you, to whom I gave glory, power, a country, laws and customs, and in whom I unfortunately reposed so unworthy a confidence."

Thus saying, he waved around him his spear, and drove to a distance the stubborn ghosts, angrily refusing to enter amongst them.

But when these vulgar spirits had been repulsed, stimulated by reverential curiosity, the shades of Pompey and Cato, and of Scipio and Cæsar, and of Octavian, Marc Antony, Brutus and Tullius, gathered around him, when he, observing the dignity of their aspects, and (being his descendants) that they were unknown to

him, appeared to become somewhat pacified, as by them he had never been injured, as they preserved in their countenances, arms, and robes, the Roman look and manner. He, therefore, asked them :—" Who are ye ?"

Tullius made reply :—" Romans, thy descendants, and by means of those whom thou seest, who were thus illustrious in life, and followers of thy virtues, thy city became great in arms, and thy people were spread abroad with such boundless dominion, that they appeared to have extended as far as the sun."

" Assuredly," replied Romulus, with warlike fierceness, " if my people continued to observe those orders in their city, and in their discipline in the field, which were first established by me, I do not marvel that they should have borne sway over the universal world. Because other founders of cities divided the cares of men upon numerous and various objects, so that they might enjoy both the repose of peace and the sedentary arts, and adorn their minds by studies, and take delight in contemplation ; whereas I turned all their faculties towards one sole object, which is of all the greatest and most durable, the force of arms. Now that city, where every individual is

a warrior, willing to live amidst glorious perils, and to encounter death cheerfully for the sake of his country; that city where the mothers do not bewail the death of their sons who fall in battle, but hold up such as an example, as a thing to be desired and gloried in by their younger children; that city, where luxury and pleasure are despised as being only soothing corruptions, and where rugged virtue is alone prized, where there is no other glory but victory, no other festivity but a triumph; and in which even the temples, the priests, and sacred rites, are all made to concur in stimulating the mind to the bearing of arms; it is quite evident that such a city, placed in the midst of enervated Italy, and surrounded by nations immersed in the luxuries of sloth, must have arisen glorious and formidable, and from a humble commencement have attained exalted domination."

As the multitude, assembled by some wonderful adventure, rages with various and mingled voices, like the sea beating upon the shore, so those Spectres began anxiously to question and reply to each other.

The aborigines asked of their descendants, and

they again of those born after them, respecting the various transactions of their times, and of the strange revolutions of fortune.

Romulus conversed much, particularly with Tullius; but, amidst such a confusion of talking, I had only collected a few broken sentences, when Romulus said:—"O wicked day! when, seated in military parliament, I was laid low by the Conscript Fathers."

Tullius went on:—"Narrate to me that accident, because with us its fame is still doubtful, not a limb of thy body having been ever found; and it was always currently reported amongst the vulgar, that thou hadst ascended to heaven."

Romulus exclaimed sorrowfully:—"Ah, pernicious falsehood! by means of which that tremendous crime was concealed from the credulous populace. Now then learn, that I being as thou hast just heard in the assembly; and employed in my exalted office of King, there arose of a sudden a great hurricane, and the atmosphere became as dark as at the dead of night; the vulgar fled howling in confusion, and even the soldiers, as if put to flight by a celestial vengeance, wan-

dered about, driven by the raging tempest, scattered along various roads. The scared multitude attempted, with timid prayers, to pacify the divine vengeance. Each was only intent, as happens in all unforeseen calamities, to provide for his own individual safety. The clouds of dust, the awful darkness, so overwhelmed the eye-sight, that men went wandering about, as if distracted with blindness, in the greatest uproar, screaming and asking of each other, what this strange disorder of the earth and sky could possibly be? But when thus the multitude had been bereaved of their senses, the Conscript Fathers, under the veil of darkness, treacherous as atrocious, I know not by what premeditated conspiracy, surrounded me, pulling out their daggers from under their robes. Neither should I have beheld any part of this horrid spectacle, because the dark raging clouds had entirely obscured the light, but that the frequent flashes of lightnings were so vivid, that, by their livid glare, I was made aware of their bloody intentions. I saw myself surrounded by blades glittering in the flashes, and a number of ill-looking ruffians, with their right hands all ready raised to strike me; I put my

hand suddenly on the hilt of my sword, resolved to die like a King; but the lightning on a sudden disappeared, and darkness shrouded my eyes. At the same moment their atrocity prevented my design, and, pierced by numerous wounds, *there* I lay, a betrayed King in the agonies of death."

While thus he spoke, he stretched forth his hand, pointing out a spot at no great distance towards the Comitia, from that whereon he stood speaking, and I marked it accurately, in order that I might know on what side of the hill the blood of so great a man had been shed.

Now then, Cicero said:—"Be appeased, magnanimous spirit, for thou speakest to a descendant who lived at least seven centuries after thee; but thy renown was even then upon all lips, and every one amongst us still called thee Father, and even their Protecting Deity."

At these words, the crowd murmured, and whispering with suppressed lamentations, repeated, "Father, Quirinus, Deity."

And he, moderating his fierceness, with a sad benignity, as if his hand still grasped the sceptre in the territory of his empire, added:—"I suffered such a death, as befitted the King of a set

of men hunted forth out of civil society, without a country, without laws, and devoid of every virtue, excepting that of a contempt of death."

"Now, behold," said Tullius, pointing around with his right hand, "what marvellous effects that single virtue produced! Behold the asylum in which thou assembled these destructive rebels, who, after they had been subjugated by thy lofty authority, founded a city, such as thou beholdest, IMMORTAL!"

Romulus gazed gravely and slowly around him, and said:—"Assuredly, I changed these bad into better, whence is manifest the force of good discipline."

Then ceased, and, not without amazement, observed stretched out before him a still more extensive and illustrious city, after so many centuries, than that which he left behind him at his decease. He leant his right hand on his spear, his left upon the hilt of his tremendous blade, and evidently displayed in his severe countenance a degree of joy at having been the author of so much grandeur. He then looked at the neighbouring Campidoglio, and next turning himself round, beheld the hill of Albano, the kingdom of his

ancestors. Meanwhile, the other Spectres were silent with reverence, and, after he had satisfied his curiosity, he turned towards me his sonorous voice in these words:—

"What living being art thou who darest thus to look upon our fierce aspects?"

And I answered:—"An Italian, and admirer of ancient heroism."

"Does my name," said he, "still remain amongst you?"

And I answered:—"Not only amongst us, but amongst all nations; and so great is still thy renown, that thou seemest yet to exist amongst us."

Said he:—"Since this my city proudly lifts up its head, not overcast by the perversity of fortune, or by the injuries of time, it appears that ye are not unmindful of its past history. Now, here there is no one, thyself only excepted, being in life, who can give me a sketch of the revolutions of its state, from the day when I fell till this very night, disjoined from it by such a lapse of ages."

I answered, not without some emotion: "Royal spirit, this is thy territory, and I, standing here

upon the Palatine Hill in thy presence, am subject to thy empire; and, therefore, as far as my rude eloquence will permit, I am ready to satisfy thee."

Then there was displayed to my view the extensive field of ancient history, and although intimidated by its length and difficulty, yet stimulated by such a heroic presence, and by the silent attention of these noble listeners, after silently collecting for a while my thoughts in silence, I disposed them in order for the required narrative.

CONFERENCE SECOND.

The Author, at the instance of Romulus, briefly narrates the Revolutions of the City after the Death of that Hero.

I THEN commenced:—"Thou hadst, after thy death, six Kings for successors, the last of whom, having come into trouble by his haughty tyranny, was exiled." Romulus started, as if disturbed by that intelligence; and I said:—"For how was it possible for a high-minded people, as thou hadst made them by thy wonderful discipline, to submit like a gang of slaves?" Then I recounted the overbearing oppressions, the royal wantonness, the insufferable pride of the race of Tarquin, and then his irritated spirit was calmed; and, after a pensive silence, he uttered this sentence:—

"A King driven into exile ought to die, either

in the field of battle, or under the daggers of the conspirators."

He ceased, and I proceeded:—"Oh! wherefore are bad Kings ever born, or why do good ones ever die?"

Romulus smiled, and exclaimed:—"Whence entered these noble sentiments into thine earthly frame?"

And I replied:—"This atmosphere, this hill, and thy presence, excite my mind to lofty thoughts."

"Proceed," said he, "gallant descendant; for thou art worthy of conversing with me." And with greater animation I proceeded:

"The monarchy having been extinguished, the love of liberty arose, and from that sprung up a Republic, illustrious beyond all others which had ever existed on the face of the earth. Because, while the Kings, thy successors, in the space of two centuries and a half, had subjected, by slow and obstinate wars, only those nations on their confines, so that a pigeon might with ease have even winged its flight across their narrow dominion, without being forced to alight from weariness, the Romans became free men, and, fighting for them-

selves, not for another, in a like space of time, subjected the whole of Italy. Then, by a happy impulse, they extended their victories to the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, to the extreme regions of Asia, and to the Western Ocean, (by thee unknown,) and to the burning sands of the barbarous Lybia; in which vast extent of empire destiny comprised that same territory, where the renowned Dardanus arose, and warlike Troy, which thy pious progenitor abandoned when in flames. It was overthrown by fate, and miserably deluded by Grecian fraud.

"But yet thy race seem to have overcome fortune, since, from the deepest adversity, they were again elevated by the wonderful exercise of their virtue.

"However, as there is no perfect thing which is not liable to corruption on this earth, there then arose an intestine discord between the people and the Senate, which became a sort of incurable disorder, and in a short time destroyed that Republic, so worthy of immortality. Next, from civil contentions breaking into atrocities, thy sons became the murderers of each other, as if driven on by fate to inevitable madness; so that, finally

intoxicated, rather than satiated with blood, they bowed down their necks to the yoke of tyrants.

" But that people which had slain thee, O Romulus! their father, only because thou wert somewhat haughty in thy majesty, and had next expelled the royal race with ignominy, afterwards bowed their proud heads before the iron sceptre of such despots, as never were tolerated by any other people; because not one, but many, hired in succession, were suffered by the high Quirites at one period, then become the sport of beasts bearing crowns. What do I say? One of them* murdered all his relations, and then boasted that he was as fortunate as Priam, who had been the last of his race. The Senate, thenceforth called the Assembly of the King, was by him denominated a drove of slaves, in cruel mockery; and they strove, by their infamous proceedings, to show that they well merited that appellation. Rome looked on, and permitted her innocent virgins to be dragged to the scaffold, and deflowered by the executioner before being beheaded; there being an ancient law, that no virgin should be

* Tiberius.

condemned to death. So that, in order that this might not be compromised, the laws of nature itself were not respected. Then the tyrants no longer dwelt in this thy palace; but after their atrocities, becoming cowards, and betaking themselves to some desert island, and there, becoming inaccessible, invisible, and implacable, dragged out their infamous old age in dreadful lasciviousness. In the mean time, they filled these walls with their spies, annoying every one to such a degree, that all the natural ties of blood and friendship were dissolved,—brothers calumniating their own sisters, and sons dragging their innocent fathers to judgment. So great was now become the reward to commit wickedness.

"Canst thou believe, O lofty minded Quirinus! that this thy royal palace was in after times converted by a tyrant* into a public brothel, in which was exacted, like a tribute, the wages of vulgar debauchery? Canst thou believe that the same wretch created one of his horses a priest? And if such acts of frenzy be hardly credible, still more incredible is the fact, that a whole na-

* Caligula.

tion should endure for four long years so execrable a tyrant. But after him there appeared upon the throne one so stupid,* that he could not even be made to recollect whom he had murdered, and condemned the same men again and again to death. This man, if, indeed, he could be so called, was tolerated in this country of Romans for almost three lustres. After whom there appeared a still more ferocious monster,† seated upon the bloody throne, who, a prey to cruel suspicions, poisoned his aunt and his brother, and murdered his own mother by the blows of a heavy club. Then, ferocious even in his amours, he polluted his own bed-chamber with the blood of his wife, whom he put to death, to make room for another lady, whom he loved better, and who was afterwards murdered by him with his own hands. This horrible monster, for upwards of three lustres, poured out the blood of Romans in full torrents. Behold, how blind destiny exalted to the throne those who were hardly worthy of serving with bent backs for a footstool to a good monarch. There dwelt in this palace a despot;‡

* Claudius. † Nero. ‡ Domitian.

who, whilst the enemy was attacking the empire on all quarters with formidable wars, remained in his gilded apartments at a distance from these glorious perils, playing at dice and catching flies! And another successor of his,* shut up even in this abode with three hundred concubines, filled the city with executions, leaving the cares of the empire to his army, which now no longer fought with the enemy, but with Romans."

Romulus, at this sentence, placed his right hand on his face, and appeared to be so grieved, that the tears trickled from his eye-lids on his breast, and I proceeded:—

"Weep on, brave Quirinus, for the lot of this thy city is deserving of thy illustrious tears, seeing that there sprung up another the most atrocious tyrant† who had ever existed, even in those sanguinary times of which I am now speaking, who made several attempts to murder his own father, in order that he might get more speedily on his throne; and, when he was seated on it, murdered his wife, and put to death with his own hands, upon their common mother's breast, his

* Commodus. † Caracalla.

own brother, for whom her beating bosom afforded no refuge from the fratricide. Thereafter, a cruel accident placed upon the throne a young priest of the sun.* He, introducing a sanguinary mode of worship, caused to be put to death, as victims to that luminary, several young men, the flower of the best families in Italy. Then nature, as if tired of producing monsters in diadems, gave the sceptre to a young man,† who reared in the extensive gardens of this palace twenty thousand birds for his boyish amusement. In such wise this empire, which had been revered as wonderful and tremendous, became the butt of the sneers and laughter of the whole world, and the laughing-stock of her own tyrants. Thus, for upwards of two centuries and a half, after the destruction of the Republic, the lethargy of slavery oppressed thy Quirites. Meanwhile, foreign nations attacked on all sides the frontiers of the empire, and stood prepared to rush in upon it, like the waves of an overwhelming deluge. All military discipline being spurned, and love of glory extinguished, these vast dominions remained for

* Heliogabulus. † Alexander.

centuries like an extensive marsh, the calmness of which generates corruption."

"But, how!" exclaimed Romulus, fired with indignation, "was there not in such a succession of tyrants one brave man?"

I answered with submission:—"There was; but the good could not compensate for the evil produced by the bad."

Said he again:—"But if the empire was spacious and absolute, there must of a necessity have been power and arms?"

I replied:—"There was an army, but its enterprises were confined to the creating and putting to death the tyrants."

He remained as if pensive for a time, then broke forth:—"What a marvellous thing it is, that such an empire should have lasted; so that I am certain thou art about to tell me that it was shortly put an end to."

And I answered:—"An extreme desolation, scattered in fragments the gigantic Colossus of the Roman empire. It became the prey of barbarous nations, and at the same time of innumerable tyrants, who were often raised to the throne in the morning by fickle fortune, and

cast headlong from it before the sun set. At the same time, Rome, uncertain who might become her master, beheld the barbarous Scythians close to her sacred gates, threatening and reproaching her with her cowardice.—What shall I say!—There was even, alas, cruel fortune! in that age of which I am speaking, a monarch* of this empire taken prisoner by the remote Parthians, who, condemned all his life to a disgraceful outrage, bent his back to the victor, and served him in place of a footstool, when he was mounting upon horseback."

This intelligence excited a dismal lamentation, mingled with muttered wrath. I heard sighs and anguish, and at the same time the clashing of arms, and half-uttered threatenings. Wherefore, I stood dubious whether I should cut short my discourse or proceed. But Romulus encouraged me with his right hand, kindly beckoning me to proceed. Therefore, I added:—

"It was not enough for these barbarians thus to tread upon that royal back, which had never been shown in flight on the field of battle; but,

* Valerian.

after his too tardy death, cruel also towards his corpse, they hung it up as a doleful trophy in a temple, and showed it with a smile to the Roman ambassadors."

The ghosts listened with sad silence to this miserable reverse, and then, after a short pause, appeared full of grief, and the murky air murmured to their sighs. I beheld, nevertheless, that some, such as Brutus, Atticus, Tullius, and a few other great Republicans, expressed no signs of wonder at this news, but listened to it haughtily. Then I, summoning courage from their presence, and inclined to make free reflections, boldly exclaimed :—

" But, however, why should not one of your monarchs serve for triumph to another, when so many were by you vilified upon that triumphal road ?"

So saying, I pointed towards the way lying under the hill towards the lofty Campidoglio. The warrior-ghosts seemed glad at this sentence. The multitude were silent, as being souls averse to liberal sentiments. But the royal signal of Quirinus prevailed, who commanded me, somewhat austerely, as if he had been annoyed by these inter-

ruptions, that I should go on with my narration. And then I continued:—

"The unwieldy empire was at length broken to pieces by the sanguinary assaults of immense nations issuing forth from the frozen regions of the North, and the caverns of Asia; and, as so ruinous and vast a mass could not be governed by a single person, it was divided principally into two portions, an Occidental and an Oriental. This city remained the seat of the Hesperian monarch; but, upon the banks of the Hellespont, there arose another famous city, which still preserves another aspect, populous, ferocious, and in which was placed the throne of the Oriental monarch. Then the lap of this ample domination being torn asunder, like a spacious mountain cleft asunder by an earthquake, from the fissures of which rush forth torrents, so the nations attacked it on all sides, as if this immense empire had been a common object of their wrath and devastations. But thou, O Quirinus! art perhaps but little solicitous to know what conquerors the other regions fell under, and, anxious only about this our Italy, wouldst gladly learn its fate amidst such a tide of misfortune. Know, therefore, that

it was reduced under the empire of a barbarous nation, which had sprung from the icy rocks of the pole. But thy city, not even then submerged in that inundation, arose amidst all these storms, as if such were its perpetual destiny, pre-eminently grand and marvellous, and in a manner which thou never yet, nor even any of you could expect by any human conjecturing; because thy empire, from a cruel origin, having become splendid by virtue, was still only the work of men. But another, never as yet beheld in all by-past ages, exalted itself in the midst of the baseness of the times, and of the injuries of fortune:—an empire divine and everlasting! - For what other empire can be divine, if not this, produced without arms, augmented without usurpations, confirmed by the spontaneous consent of its subjects, to which monarchs gave freely cities, regions, and voluntary tributes, extended throughout the whole universe by means of persuasion, just as much as ye extended yours by force of arms? It is preserved without an army, is strong without force, and feared without aggression. This power has arisen from that whereby all human dominion is extinguished—from humility

without the sword, and without gold; and victorious kings and savage nations have bowed before it, more ready to combat in its cause, and more submissive to its unarmed will, than even were the tyrants to your arms whom fortune had betrayed into your hands."

CONFERENCE THIRD.

Numa and Romulus dispute as to whether Empires are sustained by force of Arms, or by Moral Discipline.

THEN there arose, shortly after I had finished, a shade, which had been sitting (pensively listening to me) upon the ancient base of a column, and said :—

" If this empire be as thou sayest, it was founded by myself, and by no other person." Thus saying, he threw back from his head with his right hand a veil which covered it.

Romulus, with a stern look, turning to him, angrily asked :—" Who art thou, audacious and scornful Spectre, who thus falsely arrogatest to thyself my glory ?"

While he thus spoke, he extended his threatening javelin; and the other, undisturbed, grave in aspect, with a long flowing beard, and religious appearance, placidly made reply:—

"Peace, O magnanimous Quirinus, this is not a place for armed violence, and with thee I contend but only in discreet and liberal discourse. Know that I am he who, immediately after thy cruel death, ascended upon thy throne. Numa is my name."

At which words the most profound silence pervaded the air, and all the apparitions appeared to listen to him as to their greatest sage. Even Romulus seemed to share in the general veneration; for drawing back his spear, he calmly stood in silence, and listened. Then Numa proceeded in the following manner:—

"From the words of this mortal I fully understand, that the present empire of our city arises from pious institutions, and has its increase from the majestic reverence of religion. But I am he who, leading men from thy ferocious discipline to mild habits, pointed out to them the usefulness of justice, and the inducements to works of virtue, by means of venerable sacred

rites, with fear of divine wrath, and with the joyful hopes of wondrous rewards following an honourable life. I, however, received from thee a hardy and barbarous people, intoxicated with their own cupidity, violent, ravishing, depredators, every one breathing what was pointed out by thee as thy main scope, a valorous injustice, for which conquest was a virtue, and fighting an act of necessity, confounding force with reason, and the justice of a cause with its success.

"But I, not without admiring these high-minded institutions, discovered in them a poisonous fountain of wickedness, which, in a short time, would have spread universal destruction; because, without the shackles of religious discipline, no nation was ever long held together, or fortunate in its undertakings; and the human heart, when not softened by the doctrines of justice, remains, I will admit, courageous in the field, and adapted to war, but unsociable and stubborn. Now I purified these thy Quirites, still stained with the blood of their neighbours, and without extinguishing in their breasts the love of glory, I moderated it to that degree, that, previous to extending their empire, the city might be fully

completed, and that, before proceeding to impose laws on others, they might first make laws for themselves. That people, then, which, under thy iron sceptre, was an object of detestation to all, so that, like a nest of stinging and poisonous snakes, every people around them was bent on their destruction; that people, which the universal terror of others must have finally exterminated; that people, which, from its oppressive and haughty violence, was a favourite of none, I left to posterity, disciplined in justice, venerated by its neighbours, visited by those from a distance, reverent towards heaven, loyal in its treaties, loved by all, suspected by none. To such a degree were its promises believed, its indignation deprecated, its virtues praised, its misfortunes deplored; so that all men, in order to accomplish any illustrious enterprise, ought first to premise good-faith, which is the basis of all confidence; because without that they must ever remain insecure and tottering."

Quirinus broke forth, while his corslet appeared to tremble on his breast:—

"O thou who presumest to argue with me about justice, and laws and discipline, and sacred

rites, and to me who founded that throne on which thou satest, audaciously pointest out how a prince ought to reign—Tell me, King of Peace, and crowned Priest, what were thy triumphs?"

The other answered, without wrath:—"One only, that of being called Father."

"Since then thou vauntest," said Romulus, with disdain, "O King, without a sword, with how many acres didst thou augment thy dominions?"

Numa answered slowly:—"With none; neither do I regret it; for I yet glory in a long and tranquil reign. Nay more, perhaps thou art of opinion that it was a less difficult task to preserve a detested empire, produced by the fruits of usurpation, than to found it. I am he who sanctified thy cruel enterprises; who rendered this spot of land, which had been execrated by all, grateful to every stranger, who converted these walls, stained by a brother's blood, into an august abode, and who transformed this gang of outcasts into an assemblage of heroes. These were my acts; this my kingdom, to root out bad fame from the world, and, through venerable habits, to cause

men to be not only feared in war, but respected in peace.

" Nor presume to think, proud founder, that I, from cowardice, preferred a life of tranquillity to one of glorious peril; because, in a man like myself, distinguished by deep learning, that degree of valour which is possessed by the vulgar could not be awanting.

" I only restrained, but did not eradicate the inclination to warfare, and conjoined glory with justice; by which means I am certain that I bequeathed to my successors a more venerated sceptre than that which I received from thee. But as this mortal has shown us that this empire still exists by means of its sacred institutions, and not from any force of arms, who will deny that I had more than any other, from remote ages, laid the foundation of so marvellous an event?"

" And I am assured," exclaimed Quirinus, with a hoarse voice, " that if this empire is still venerated, it is derived from arms; because the memory of its ancient valour still survives, even in its present state of indolence. If an aged warrior only makes whirls with his sword in his left

hand, nevertheless his wrath is respected through the remembrance of its former effects. All power is founded in arms, for these are productive of fortune, terror, praise, admiration. Thy arts possibly maintained the city in a state of torpid and cowardly tranquillity,—arts by which timid tyrants guide the vulgar, like a flock trembling at a flash of lightning, but the contempt of the noble-minded; and these thy deceits are hated by valiant kings."

When he had thus spoken, he turned on his heel, as if resolved to abandon the disagreeable argument. But Numa placidly following him, said:—

"Since thou vauntest of thy generous understanding, wherefore dost thou withdraw from a comparison of opinions? Think how ferocious must be thy mind, which would set bounds to that which is of all things the most free, human opinion."

Quirinus turned himself about; and Numa, touching his glittering javelin, said:—"Then this is the only thing whereby to sustain an empire."

Then Quirinus snatched it away, as if angry;

that it should have been touched by the hand of another; and Numa proceeded:—

"Tell me, O gallant prince, whether is the force of an empire in the king alone, or also in his subjects?"

He answered, severely turning his face:—"What dost thou say? a king alone—would be no king; the power is in the army under his command. Thou reasonest certainly like a monarch who never commanded one!"

And Numa, without being ruffled by the bitter sneer, calmly replied:—"A king alone, therefore, hath no empire, which is altogether in the obedience of his subjects; and in proportion as these are numerous, and prompt in the execution of his wishes, so much the greater is his power."

"Well, then," said Romulus, "spirits truly royal, by presenting themselves the first as leaders, and in all magnanimous undertakings, firmly infuse into the people so great a degree of admiration, that they are submissively followed. The herd, of its own accord, follows closely the steps of a good shepherd."

"But," said Numa, "numerous and various

are the sources of obedience in the people; and as that is generally opposed to depraved inclinations, and to human corruption, therefore it is necessary to make use either of force to constrain, or opinion to persuade it."

"Undoubtedly," said Quirinus, smiling,—"thou must have had a treasure of recondite doctrine, whereby thou couldst form so marvellous a dominion; in which, by means of dialectic arguments, and friendly persuasions, were refrained all internal crimes, and attacks from without. But I knew no other excepting the sword in the field, and the axe within these walls."

Said Numa:—"With force I would have repulsed the enemy, and extinguished evil-doers in the city; but with what sort of force couldst thou have bent men's minds to the love of their country, to glorious intentions, to sobriety, to suffer military privations, and private inconveniences, for the public benefit? And yet the true strength of republics consists in these virtues,—insomuch, that without these, all others must needs languish, like unfruitful plants deprived of the sun's rays."

"Well, then," replied Romulus, "these vir-

tues have their rise, and are propagated by warfare, seeing that victory produces not only fame, but rewards at the same time."

"Thou art deceived," interrupted Numa, "for it is quite impossible to make an army satisfied constantly with rewards corresponding to its achievements; because the fruits of victory are daily uncertain; and even if they should be otherwise, yet they always prove but very scanty rewards, when divided amongst numerous combatants. For the king alone enjoys the provinces conquered with their blood; the greatest prizes of warfare were never yet given to the army, which, even in the midst of victories, is necessarily destroyed. Then, in order that the city should have brave warriors, it is requisite that it should induce its young men to suffer death for its sake. Now, then, tell me with what premium thou wouldst allure thy citizens to feel so great a degree of indifference for themselves, and so supreme a love for their city? Not certainly by means of force, because then thou wouldst always have a vile army, ready to take to flight."

"How thou arguest," exclaimed Romulus; "I

had gallant troops, because they thirsted after praise."

"Then," said Numa, "neither gold, nor robes, nor food, nor festivals, were the rewards of thy warriors, but praise; and by means of that they rushed on to the combat with noble vigour. And this said praise, what else is it but an opinion of the mind, and popular rumour? and thus, then, it seems, thou thyself art inclined to concede to me that the most effectual impulse of thy legions was an intellectual pleasure, a reward of thinking, a food of opinion. Wherefore, it is evident, that force alone is quite insufficient for the government of the multitude. The monarch of a vast empire, and of innumerable legions, is a being less strong than his own horse, less swift than his hounds, and less powerful by far than his oxen. For, indeed, his power consists in the constant inclination of his subjects to follow the bent of his inclinations. Which obedience is maintained by the guardianship of religious institutions. Because, it is not practicable to bend men's minds to so extraordinary a degree of docility, unless by extraordinary means. Wherefore, I, taking into consideration the greatness of

the nations of antiquity, and of those of my own time, observed, that this was the order observed in their institutions, namely, that the daily and common actions of civil life were guided by laws and customs, but that all the extraordinary and difficult enterprises were always subjected to the controul of celestial deliberations. Still, however, their civil institutions, confined within a narrow compass, were barely sufficient to preserve in their cities and their fields the lives of each individual from mutual injuries. While, on the other hand, the awfulness of their temples, their pious hymns, the imposing solemnity of their religious rites, their invocation of the gods, the fear of divine wrath, and hope of wonderful rewards in a future and immortal life, excited men's minds to such a lofty pitch of enthusiasm, and at the same time subdued them to such a useful degree of docility, that they went on joyfully through the thorny paths of the most austere virtue, regardless of themselves, and only mindful of their country. I therefore turned the ferocious minds of my subjects towards the fear of the gods; to the end that, being frightened by the idea of their vengeance, they might abstain from injuries. And,

at the same time, I excited them to undertake illustrious deeds, by means of venerable discipline, and wonderful oracles of divine voices, thus guiding, by secret means, their stubborn minds to become useful to themselves and to the community.

Romulus stood listening, with downcast eyes, as if immersed in various thoughts,—at length he exclaimed:—

"Then thou deludedst thy people with vain devices? Behold the venerable King who deceived the common people, like a vile wizard, with illusions. I held myself out as an example, —ever the foremost amongst my soldiers in battle,—I surpassed them all both in sobriety and vigilance. A warrior-king, ready for a glorious death every morning,—a Father among my people,—terrible in the field,—such was my system of discipline. By means of these I founded a wonderful city, where there had been only a desert solitude; there I assembled a tremendous army, before which those warlike nations by which I was surrounded took to flight.—How—what didst thou do?"

"I," replied Numa, "called upon Jupiter to

reign with me; and as a minister of Heaven I promised eternal empire to the Romans. And you, ye ghosts of posterity, narrate to him your greatness, because, I am certain, that with such a code of discipline, your empire became both extensive and lasting."

Thus saying, he covered his venerable countenance with his sacerdotal veil. He afterwards seated himself apart on the marble shaft of a column, a relic of the devastations of time, with becoming tranquillity. Romulus turned upon him his eyes, and seemed to be somewhat astonished at his words; and then, as if impelled by curiosity, interrogated the surrounding spectres, first about his institutions, and thereafter as to their effects. Marcus Tullius, more especially, approaching the mighty Quirinus, narrated, with his usual eloquence, the sage counsels of Numa, and their utility, as proved in guiding the opinions of the vulgar, and directing them in the paths of justice and virtue; insomuch, that he, like an illustrious and royal spirit, sighing, exclaimed:—

"Now I perceive that I left a great part of the glory to my successor; because, loyal and

daring in my opinions, I reigned without any useful frauds, and so I was murdered."

Said Tullius:—"Be appeased, O Quirinus, because, so great was thy share in the greatness to which this empire attained, that no one could ever thereafter obscure thy glory. For, although the gentle Numa, in an indirect manner, confirmed its civil institutions, yet he was not thy rival in glory, but only thy coadjutor. The vicissitudes of the governments of all ages have demonstrated clearly, that they can be preserved by means of no better arrangement, than that whereby, in modes suited to each different epoch and people, are conjoined, as if in perfect harmony, their civil government and sacred and religious rites."

Numa lifted up his head at this opinion, and said:—"O wise and fortunate is that city, where such an agreement exists, because it will possess a body of citizens not obedient only, but persuaded and desirous of dying for it. Not their bodies alone, which indeed might give way to force, would be devoted and ready, but also that which is not under the controul of any physical powers,—even their free thoughts. Whoever

can command the understandings of men, can lead them on to incredible undertakings."

After having thus spoken, he disappeared like a flash of light; and the assembled ghosts sadly murmured, as if groaning because their venerated King was immersed in eternal darkness.

Romulus then fixed his formidable eyes upon his javelin, and throwing it on the ground, stamping on it with his feet, broke it in two, and then crushed its fragments, and, with compressed voice, murmured:—

"Thou vain instrument of a troublesome empire, the crosier was more powerful and fortunate than thee. By what destiny do I thus rise again, and behold this my city now triumphant by means of a discipline so contrary to mine? and thou who so bravely sustainest these our aspects, if ever thou shouldst relate to its present inhabitants this almost incredible prodigy, namely, that thou hast conversed face to face with me, tell them that, in as far as, by listening to thee, I have become acquainted with the present empire, that I even have seen Rome, and knew it not;" and, so saying, he disappeared, and the mountain resounded as from the shock of an earthquake.

The earth opened under the angry spectre; and, sighing, he sunk down into it, covering his face with his vizor. The ghosts collected the fragments of the spear which had been crushed by the founder of their glorious empire, and showed their pieces one to another in silence.

CONFERENCE FOURTH.

Lamentations of the Shades over the Ruins—the Punishment of Nero.

AFTER this tumult had been somewhat allayed, behold a ghost which I did not know, which silently regarded that mountain, and then cast around its eyes, contemplating the surrounding regions. At times stooping down, it collected fragments of the ancient marbles, and of the ruined sculptures, and sometimes it tore up by the roots the weeds which were growing amongst them, and then turning itself round to me, exclaimed:—

"What outrage is this to that Palatine Hill, the birth place of our empire, and wonderful origin of the most wonderful grandeur. This spot was sacred on account of the Lupercal Cavern,

where were discovered, in so extraordinary a manner, the royal twins! Here arose the viminal plant, (the fig-tree,) that venerable and pious memorial!—Yonder, too, was the majestic Temple of Apollo, and the house of Scaurus, and of the free Gracchi, and of the eloquent Marcus Tullius. Ah me! scarcely can I now discover any vestiges of their marble porticoes, and august monuments, amongst the rank herbage, and the mouldering clods of earth."

The crowds re-echoed back these lamentations, and the Spectre perceiving an empty urn, added:—

"Here, too, are cast forth our bones, and the wind in very sport now disperses our ashes."

Another said with a sigh:—"Behold the huts of the husbandmen, composed of broken inscriptions, and sepulchral sculptures. The cruel mattock turns up this hill full of our bones, whence, amongst them, arise the delights of your banquets.* The foolish cultivator breaks to pieces the sculptured words, wherewith the sorrowing husband divulged to posterity the name and chastity of his beloved lady! Ah! spoils so long ex-

* Alluding to the vineyards on the side of the hill.

empt from the injuries of fate, now, alas! do ye suffer complete destruction."

From another part there issued forth these doleful words:—"Behold these waters which ran within these spacious aqueducts, and were thereafter received into the bathing places of the palestra, and into the cisterns of the baths, but now cast abroad, they wander along in humble brooks. The lofty tops of the cypresses wave to the wind over these deserted ruins, and their roots penetrate into those chambers, where, for centuries, not a single sunbeam has entered. Fallen low are the columns of Asiatic marble, and their bases are dispersed like a vile wreck upon the field, and those which still prop up the lofty ruins of the palace, remain but as memorials of the desolations of the barbarians."

"Then," exclaimed a ghost from the crowd, regarding me with disdain:—"Wherefore dost thou not destroy every remnant of them, that at least all their ancient splendour might be for ever forgotten, and then they would no longer remain the squalid, and deserted, and silent abode, only visited by howling and famished wolves?"

I was silent, through feelings of pity, at hear-

ing this bitter complaint, the sad motives for which stood revealed before my eyes. Then, as if they had exhausted themselves in venting their sorrows, they ceased; and Tullius, turning round towards the east, said:—

"There is the Alban Hill, which slopes down towards the sea, and there the Tiburtine Hill, the delight of our Flaccus, and my delicious Tusculum. All hail ye delightful solitudes, where, amidst the storms of civil broils, we yet found some calm moments for our agreeable studies!"

Then looking towards the south, he gazed intently over the foot of the Palatine, towards the valley, as if he had beheld some strange sight. Wherefore, I asked him the cause of his silence, and he answered:—

"Was not the Circus Maximus here?"

It was, said I, and at present the spot where it stood can scarcely be distinguished by those conversant with the fatiguing studies of ancient monuments. Still, however, we know by traditions, and by your coins, its form, and its temples, obelisks, its goals, its size, and the magnificence of those games, whence, with such a guide, we can

trace out the scattered remains of the spacious Circus.

Tullius sorrowfully exclaimed:—"What a melancholy silence now, where once the heavens were rent with the festive acclamations of three hundred thousand spectators?"

And I, partaking in the grief of so great a mind, added:—A capricious destiny seems to to persecute the remains of your grandeur, and transmutes them into extraordinary forms. We are well aware, although thy late posterity, that on this side, which slopes down to the valley of the Circus, existed the pastoral hut of Romulus, composed of reeds and straw, and long preserved in memory of his simple habits of life. Near it there stood a shrub, which, according to ancient report, was venerated for many generations, as having sprung up from the wood of his javelin: Which memorials of the modesty and valour of so mighty a King, were afterwards burnt in contempt by those vile tyrants, who here erected a palace, suited to their haughty pride.

At these words the shade of Octavian stood before me, and said:—

"I am he who found Rome composed of

plaster, and left it of marble. What sayest thou of proud tyranny? Dost thou think there was not a sufficient space for lodging the people, because I adorned this, the seat of our empire, with lofty edifices? Ought the governor of such a boundless empire to have inhabited the cabin of Romulus? But who raised this palace? This my people. If thou wishest to grieve, repine at the covetous, and bestow praise on the generous, because the latter return through clemency that which is exacted by necessity, but the former always take away, and never make any return."

I was silent, from reverence for the illustrious Emperor, but yet I considered with myself how wonderfully pertinacious is the pride of royalty, even when separated from the flesh, and I checked on my lips the rising reply. Marcus Tullius, who, as being the most penetrating of these intellectual phantoms, penetrated my thoughts, and said:—

"Thou didst well not to answer, because immoderate and invincible by all reasoning is boundless ambition, and insatiable is its pride, and never to be thoroughly satisfied."

Then Marcus Brutus exclaimed indignantly:—

" Then the example of his uncle, laid low by me, hath had no effect in moderating his presumption. But with a tyrant, now no more, it is cowardice to contend." He ceased then, turned his back, and withdrew.

Meanwhile the Spectres proceeded onwards to the eastern foot of the hill, where it slopes down into the Valley of Cœlius, and penetrated into every deep recess, desirous to behold once more the reliques of such mighty structures; when, suddenly, there arose a groan, and turning myself towards the spot whence it proceeded, I saw a stern and melancholy form, which, with pitiful complaints, disturbed the bystanders, and said:—

" Then there remains not one relique of all my golden palace, nor even of my lofty statue? Lo, in this very spot stood my majestic colossal image, now I cannot even discern the very stones which formed its base."

While he thus spoke, I gazed with attention on his face, and, without interrogating any ghost, I myself knew that it was that of the Matricide Nero. Wherefore, remembering me of his atrocity, his arrogance appeared the greater, in thus

lamenting him of the well-merited insults of fortune. Turning, therefore, towards him, I said, Why does it grieve thee, O thou executioner of the Romans, that that monument, not of the peoples' benevolence, but of thy haughty folly, should be dissipated, converted into dust. It is rather a wonder that it should ever have stood upon this land, once the favoured asylum of liberty, or that it should not have been broken into fragments immediately by mere popular indignation. For if the image of thy hated aspect was ever destined to remain, it could have been from no other reason, than that it might become the object of eternal execration. But fate, to make a mockery of thy insane ambition, caused this very colossus of thine to serve for the statues of other tyrants, thy successors. One of whom commenced by taking off its head, and substituting that of himself in its stead. Another made that resemblance also give place to his own. Then his successors continued to move off and on the head upon this monument, which had become the laughing-stock of their foolish emulation.

At these words, the spectre turned on me his grim eyes, not yet deprived, although an incorpo-

real matter, of his cruel disposition, But I, still more roused by these menacing looks to a more noble effort of liberty, that he might at least hear, after the long silence of death, some becoming reprehension, intrepidly added:—

"Nothing, now, will it avail thee to lament that time has destroyed thy marble trophies, because far greater and beyond all royal palace, or great and durable Colossus, remains the memory of thy atrocious guilt. Murderer of thy mother, wife, brother, and tutor, how canst thou doubt of having obtained perpetual ignominy?"

At these reproofs the spectre shuddered; and, in the mean while, there assembled around him countless shadows, each murmuring against him the most bitter execrations. One showed him the wounds, by which, through his cruelty, it had suffered death, others spurted upon him the blood which flowed from theirs, and in these their lamentations the wretched spirit seemed to suffer (for all the wicked are wretched) the most infernal misery. But I beheld a female ghost issue forth from the multitude, and approach him. She had a squalid and angry countenance, her hair was dishevelled, but her look still majestic

Wrapped up in a mantle of mourning, as if the remains of her funeral pomp, she grasped in her right hand, as if it were a bundle of rods, a bundle of twisted snakes, and in her left a torch, which, striking upon the surrounding objects with its bloody light, made them all appear dyed in blood. Then, having approached close to the tyrant, who trembled at her presence, she dashed the serpents with violence upon his breast, which suddenly entered into it, like greedy earthworms rushing into the earth, after being turned up by the ploughshare. The tyrant groaned deeply with profound anguish; and the lady, as if pleased, bitterly smiled. Next, she dashed the torch against his breast, in renewal of her vengeance. The heart of Nero glowed with flames, and, at the same time, the snakes hissed within the blazing wound. He, meanwhile, shrieked aloud with hideous lamentations, and then betook himself madly to flight; but the persecuting ghost followed close upon his heels, shaking over his shoulders her scourge of snakes. He betook himself at length within the vast ruins of the adjacent amphitheatre of Flavius, and there they both disappeared. Then I said to some one near me,

"Who is that? and what is that frightful vengeance?

And he answered:—"That is his mother, whom he put to death. No pain can be equal to the crime; therefore, grieve not for him."

Thus he spoke on seeing me moved by such a punishment. Because at such a spectacle I forgot for a while the atrocities of the cruel monarch in the commiseration of such a lasting vengeance. But he, aware of my thoughts, concluded:—"Thy pity is not deserved." He ceased, and I turned away somewhat vexed at the infirmity of my nature.

CONFERENCE FIFTH.

The Colosseum,—The Forum,—and the Mamertine Prison.

THE crowds murmured like the sea, moved with indignation and horror against the matricide, and, following their flying steps, flitted across through the ample ruins of the amphitheatre, and collected therein in a dense mass.

The night had now exceeded the middle of its silent course. The splendour of the exalted moon, irradiating that edifice, appeared to render it more spacious, and to make its forms stand more prominent. For the cavities of the arches, and of the ruinous caves, remained enshrouded in profound darkness; while, on the contrary, the external parts of the massy mole, struck by the rays of the planet, shone forth with marvellous

lustre from amidst the surrounding darkness. The night breeze gently waved the shrubs and floating ivy upon the ruined walls, while, through the arched vomitories, the spangled sky appeared like a dark-blue mirror. As a countless flight of wood-pigeons quit the wing, and alight amongst some rural dwellings, thus the spectres scattered themselves speedily over the structure, some diving down into its deep recesses, others ascending, tier by tier, over its tangled vaults, flitted about till they had reached the highest pinnacle of the building. Meanwhile, I stood in the midst of the arena contemplating so wondrous a spectacle. Tullius remained with me, and the unchangeable Pompey, the severe Brutus, the cheerful Horatius, with the accustomed bevy of friendly ghosts, stood all around me in a familiar manner. Then there arose a doleful sound of various voices, lamenting that this massive structure should have been so much dilapidated, that there were scarcely any vestiges now visible of its ancient magnificence, and not a single memorial of those extraordinary spectacles formerly displayed upon its proud arena. A throng of vulgar ghosts afterwards colleeted themselves around me, some in

woe, others in wrath, and uttered reproaches to me respecting the barbarous spoliations committed on this once splendid edifice, now, alas! such a sad example of the all-destructive influence of time.

For some time I endured the annoyance of these remarks; but at length, excited by the haughty observations of the populace to enter on a defence of our times, I broke forth in the following words:—

"Behold a wonderful pile erected at the *fiat* of a despot, by the arms of squalid slaves, and all for what purpose? These are the prisons whence there issued forth, thirsting for blood, and ravenous with hunger, troops of famished wild beasts, procured at enormous expence by the hunters of Africa. Upon this arena, so infamous for bloodshed and cruel death, men were constrained, in order to yield amusement to their fellows, to present themselves to the jaws of lions. Panting along this ground ran the hungry tiger, crushing in his rabid maw the palpitating human bodies, equally delighted as yourselves with his terrible repast. Not an atom of this arena, but has been stained with these horrible massacres, so little

suited to a polished people, and adapted only for the savage contemner of every humane usage. On this spot the bleeding gladiator breathed his last, whilst you, equally skilled in this barbarous and cruel sport, drew distinctions between the various shades of agony, enjoying them as if they were a source of ignominious delight, applauding those who expired in graceful attitudes, and reviling the others with sarcasms and execrations.

Then, too, as if the peril of a gladiatorial fight had not been sufficient to satisfy the cruel holidays of the vulgar, they were at set times decked out with extraordinary inventions. So that, from the various modes of fighting, either with different shaped swords, or shields, or daggers, the appearance of the combat might be varied, consequently the several accidents resulting therefrom. Then there appeared one holding a net, and the other a dagger, so that the former, by an adroit method of casting it, might entoil his antagonist, and, on the failure of which, the latter murdered him with his poniard. And, at times, too, it was considered a great luxury to behold the gladiators fighting blind-folded, so that they might encounter strange hazards, and unforeseen

deaths; and then, again, your wretched caprices were delighted with beholding the mortal agonies of men of dwarfish stature. A generous atrocity, truly, spectators as you were of those vile and cruel sports, to sit calmly and look on, decked out in your finest holiday suits, satiated with splendid banquets, and intoxicated with rich Falernian. But now that this arena has been converted into a calm solitude, and this vast ruin changed into an innocent object of study, for those polished strangers who are resorting continually to these hills, who is there amongst you who can be justified in imputing blame to us?"

Then there appeared before me a spectre, which had a martial aspect, who indignantly brandished his arms, and made the atmosphere ring with their clash; and thus broke forth:—

"Who art thou, the audacious censor of our customs? Assuredly a man of cowardly race, who art afraid of death."

And I made answer:—"To be afraid of death is base; but, of all things, the most base is to be delighted at the death of another."

He answered:—"Wonderful effects are not to be produced, unless by means of remarkable causes.

But since the fear of his own destruction is an inherent human infirmity, which stands in the way of all daring exploits, so, in order to remove from the breast that depressing feeling, our ancestors deemed it convenient to make preparations in time of peace for a marvellous contempt of death, so that our warriors should fall in combat, without uttering a single groan. This spectacle was unattended with pity, and breathing throughout a tragic terror,—for the being daily inured to death, makes men despise it so much, that they are thence enabled to live exaltedly free and dreaded."

He said, and disappeared, as if averse to argue the matter with me. Then, turning myself to Tullius, I asked him:—"Who is that ferocious spirit?

And he answered:—"A gladiator, celebrated in our times, and most expert in giving death-blows.

"Thence, I said:—"And has not death, in depriving him of his earthly body, also taken away the atrocity of his mind?

Tullius concluded:—"Be not disturbed, O humane descendant! amongst us there were found

no defenders of so cruel an act, except those only who lived by it as a profession. For, lo! have we not all, by our silence, given our assent to thy just reprehensions."

While this discourse took place, we passed along with the crowd, under the arch of Titus, entering into the plain which divides the Campidoglio from the Palatine, and extends itself towards the Quirinal. This space was covered with cows and bullocks, which lay around the ruins of the ancient monuments, drowsily ruminating. From time to time their interrupted lowings broke the silence of the night. The shades, in approaching to that celebrated spot, where they had been accustomed to assemble in their Comitia, appeared more than usually indignant and riotous. Even Tullius himself, who was near me, appeared to be uncommonly excited. And I asked him:—

"What object is there here which gives thee so much displeasure?"

No longer with benevolent aspect, but enraged, he looked sternly all around him, without uttering a word. And when he had stood for a while

silent, amidst the tumult of his thoughts, he asked me :—

" Wherefore is the Comitium and the Forum changed into a herd-stye? Had this valley been again flooded, or covered with wood, as it was once in the most ancient days, when Rome was only an asylum, that would have been but an ordinary event of fortune. But for what barbarous mockery of your illustrious ancestors, do you, ye insensible descendants, now collect, in rustic contempt, your horned quadrupeds, on the very spot where was held the most august assembly of a majestic people, with their free suffrages decreeing the lot of their most extensive dominions, and powerful kings?—in that atmosphere, too, which was wont to resound with the victorious eloquence of our orators; in this spot, splendid with the images of heroes, and wonderfully adorned, and venerable throughout, with temples and porticos. And how is it that the majesty of such objects has not restrained you from profaning it?"

While he thus said, the bullocks, awakened by a ray of the moon, lowed; and Tullius, turning round to his fellow-citizens, said :—

"Alas! sad transition of fortune! Not thy voice, O illustrious Hortensius,—nor thine, exalted Brutus,—nor mine, which once ye used to listen to here, not without emotion, O ye Romans, now resound here, but the lowing of cattle disturbs these profaned remains of ancient magnificence. Your centuria are changed into the pens of cattle. There, however, formerly stood, as I well remember, our rostrums, where now is a rustic barn, filled with dried grass, as provender for the herds."

I had no suitable defence to oppose to these venerated complaints. Then I observed Horace, who went idly looking for the place of the Via Sacra, where he had formerly delighted to saunter, when absorbed in contemplation, and was grieved at not finding a single vestige of it. He observed the aspect of the ground strangely changed, the valley filled up, the hills wasted down under the burden of time. Cæsar, meantime, ascended the Campidoglio, and the crowd followed closely after him; therefore Tullius and myself approached the hill, so celebrated from their triumphs. But I beheld the crowd detained at the very bottom of the ascent, and assemb-

ling round the Arch of Septimius Severus, as if anxious to contemplate it; and delighted and admiring the sculptures and the inscriptions thereon, they said:—

"Behold the triumphal monument of a hero, who, by his victories, extended the limits of our empire."

But Cæsar continued slowly and solemnly ascending the Campidoglio, like a Dictator, feared and victorious. His deportment was majestic and fierce, as if he recollected the celebrity of his triumph. When we had passed out from under the Arch, and the ghosts had finished ascending the Capitoline Hill, Tullius asked me:—

"Does there remain any vestige here, of the vast Mamertine Prison?"

"There is some part remaining," said I, "but changed into a subterranean temple; and, instead of the groans of death, soft and pious voices are only to be heard here;" and, he added, "fortunate is such a change."

Then there issued slowly forth from these ancient vaults, a spectre. It had a purple mantle, but rent, and squalid, with ferocious eyes, and a

dark-coloured countenance, as if from the effects of a hot climate. Nevertheless it displayed in its looks a sagacious intellect, and in its gait a lofty bearing. Tullius having approached it, said:—

"Who art thou, cruel spectre, that now ariseth from this prison, foreigner in thy aspect, and disturbed by misery and care?"

It answered:—"What, then, am I indeed unknown amongst you? I am he who displayed to the deluded world the false splendour of your virtues, because, being a fratricide King, I corrupted with my gold your Consuls and Senates; and indeed the whole republic, and exposed them in mockery to the world. I propitiated the lofty wrath of the conscript fathers, by means of gifts, and purchased from the Senate that grand mart of corruption, a triumphal impunity for my atrocious usurpations."

"Enough," said Tullius, interrupting him, "it is unnecessary that thou shouldst say more to make thyself known. No person except the perfidious Jugurtha could speak so ignominiously of the Roman people. But if thou rememberest thy impunity, wherefore hast thou forgotten thy

punishment? And how dost thou presume to boast, O royal dissembler, of having vilely bribed the republic with thy jewels, when thou at length wert made to climb this very hill, following the triumphal chariot of Marius, pale and dejected, like a criminal? In this same prison, wert thou also not vilified and scoffed at by the licentious soldiery, and didst thou not afterwards expire therein, miserably, from want?—What sayest thou?"

"Proud Romans!" exclaimed the fierce Numidian, "that I should have been conquered was accidental,—that I should have followed the proud and haughty triumph, was the consequence of your barbarous custom,—that I should have been outraged by thy base soldiery, and perished in this prison from want, was the result of your own ignominious connivance, and a cruel insult to a captive King: but that I should have induced you, the proud Senate of a people who looked down on all other nations, (by gifts received from me, rendered a greedy courtezan,) to establish me in my acquired kingdom, whence your Consuls returned, one after another, from

the African shore, laden with wealth and with infamy, that indeed was the proof of your depravity, and my sagacity."

Then he turned on his heel, and again descended, by the same passage from which he had issued out. Tullius, apparently grieved, said:—

"O Rome, with what a load of ignominy wert thou covered for such a king!"

Thereafter he asked me:—"What character is left of him amongst you, and what is your opinion of these vicissitudes?"

And I answered:—"That he was wicked, but that the Senate was still more criminal than him."

Tullius sighed, as if still breathing the warmest affection for his country; and in silence deplored these abominable transactions. Wherefore I considered within myself how perfectly inexcusable were the Roman corruptions of the Jugurthan war, since the divine eloquence of so great an orator was unable to palliate them. Meantime the apparition of Jugurtha's spectre had assembled together the shades to the Mamertine prison; and many murmured loudly at his

audacious sayings, remembering the infamy of his cruel reign, and the shameful scenes of corruption occasioned by his treasures. But after he had, in angry mood, descended into the dark gulf, they again proceeded on their route.

CONFERENCE SIXTH.

On the Campidoglio.

THE ghosts walked on slowly and silently, as happens when the longing is great, the astonishment excessive, and the mind is held in suspence amidst anxious conjectures. And when they arrived at the summit of the hill, I observed that they looked around them with amazement, showing, in their countenances, some degree of pleasure; while I stood quietly awaiting their questions. But they, silent in the tranquil air, wandered through the courts, and flitted through the iron gratings, and the solid doors, as if no barrier could obstruct their incorporeal substance.

Cæsar then presented himself before me, and, with a bitter sneer, said:—"What a miserable temple of clay have ye poor creatures erected up-

on the ruins of our splendid marble temple of triumph?"

And I, hurt by his ironical address, answered: —"On this spot we offer up adorations no longer to the Divinities of War, but to the God of Peace. His temple is neither adorned with spoils dyed in blood, nor enriched with the treasures of tyrants, overthrown by triumphant injustice."

"O thou," exclaimed the Dictator, who thus talkest so proudly, "audacious spirit! in a frail body! upon this hill where we triumphed, art thou so unmindful of our illustrious deeds, that thou thus darest to sport thy opinions."

Meanwhile, there had assembled around to listen to the controversy between myself, a mortal of foreign descent, and the tremendous shade of Julius, several eminent ghosts, so that I said to Tullius, who now seemed pleased with my honest opinions, "Who are these?"

And he answered:—"They are illustrious persons, who have enjoyed triumphs. Thou seest Emilius, who led the perfidious Macedonian a captive upon this eminence, and in his person put a finishing blow to that superb kingdom. Thou beholdest the great Pompey, whose name alone is

sufficient to denote immortality. That tall broad-shouldered Spectre, wearing a tight dress, and equipped for combat, according to the ancient custom, is that terror of the ferocious Gauls, Camillus, the illustrious exile, and magnanimous citizen. Ever prodigal of his blood in defence of an ungrateful people, four times did he triumph upon this very hill. That grave and diffident looking personage, upon whose lip is still to be seen a wart, is Maximus Fabius, who conquered by delay; and that is Marcellus, denominated the Sword of the Romans, who combated with a species of hostility never before known to us. I mean that of the mechanical science of Archimedes in Syracuse. But that also was overcome by our force of arms; nor did his marvellous inventions answer any other purpose, except to place in a still clearer point of view the valour of our General."

While he thus spoke, Marcellus smiled, and shook his head; upon which still waved in all their freshness his triumphal crown of laurel. There appeared near him two venerable personages, of grave and majestic aspect, arm in arm, as if they were near relations, and intimate friends.

Tullius proceeding, added :—" He that has a ruddy complexion, and fixes upon thee his clear blue eyes, is Cato, that incorruptible Censor, the implacable foe to all wickedness, as well as to all foreign customs. The other person upon whom he leans, is his great-grandson, the heir of all his virtues, but not of his testy humours. By his death he left his country in a state of orphanage, rendering Utica for ever illustrious, and our tyrants overjoyed. Never did there appear a smile upon the lips of either of them, both were possessed of eloquence, of a strong, simple, and laconic character, equally unmoved by pleasure or by pain; they only feared infamy, but death they held in contempt. Behold, next to them comes Flaminius, who having rid Greece of her tyrants, restored her to liberty,—magnanimous gift, and more glorious than any conquest. Contemplate Marius, who again shows himself, and shuddering casts around him his scowling looks. Alas! O warrior, wherefore wert thou never benignant?"

He, like a lofty rock in the desart, fixed upon Tullius his deep-seated eyes in profound silence.

"See also Sylla," proceeded Tullius, "standing farther off still, dripping with our blood, and gazing ferociously on his terrible rival. He who now comes towards us with a slow pace, in a grave attitude, is the luxurious and wonderful Lucullus, who subdued two of the most powerful monarchs of Asia, and was himself conquered by their vices. Following him is Marc Antony, alike formidable in arms, and a prey to the vilest luxury. Both were despisers of life in the field, yet most addicted to every pleasure during peace, —frugal and dissolute,—ferocious and wanton,— effeminate and terrible, by a marvellous mixture of the most opposite and discordant qualities."

At that moment, Octavian presenting himself to us in the midst of the summit of the Campidoglia, exclaimed:—"Oh fountain of glory, to which we shall scarcely ever more attain! Where is the majesty of the place, and its spacious marble temples,—the magnificence of its porticoes, and the splendour of its monuments? Behold its illustrious courts, now transformed into stables for horses, and a remnant of that gigantic

pile, constructed of Tiburtine stone, is now become a sorrowful prison for malefactors!"

Lucullus added:—"Contemplate the seven hills, how, bending beneath the lapse of ages, they are crumbling into the vallies,—what mere hillocks they now seem in comparison with the proud eminences they once were. Behold how much sunk is the lofty Tarpeian Rock!—Here are the triumphs of time, since it can even destroy mountains.—What are these narrow courts, and these slender columns, and mean habitations?"

Thus Lucullus proudly interrogated me, and I answered:—"These humble but convenient monuments, which here arise, are the productions of peace, unstained by bloodshed, founded and preserved without crimes, and without massacre. For which reason, we are contented with them, as being elegant, noble and innocent signs of our cultivated and pacific habits."

"Worthily thou reasonest," exclaimed Tullius, "for justice is one, and everlasting; nor ought successful wickedness ever to be celebrated by pure fame. But assuredly, if in any place free discussion and daring vituperation be laudable,

and admitted, it ought to find its place here amongst us spirits, disencumbered of our earthly bodies, who were hostile to all tyranny during our lifetime, and are now, by death, set free from all earthly errors. Therefore, proceed with honest boldness in thy generous discussion."

Then I continued :—"And what in truth was thy proud triumphal pomp, except a barbarous outrage upon the feelings of conquered Monarchs? At the present day, to lose a battle is not a crime, resistance is a virtue, and clemency towards the conquered, is the universal custom of all civilized nations,—to insult and punish captives is at present only customary amongst savage and barbarous hordes. For which reason, I know not why ye were not equally generous towards Kings as ye were towards any individual soldier. Possibly Kings were at times guilty of atrocious crimes, and, therefore, ye might have gloried in having attached to your cars Perseus, the cruel calumniator of his younger brother, and Jugurtha, the perfidious exterminator of his own relations. But in your own Kings ye beheld still greater instances of infamy, than those which, with such a show of virtue, ye punished in stran-

gers. Romulus was a fratricide: Tullia, who, with execrable fury, drove her chariot-wheels over her own father, and dyed their axletrees in his blood; Sextus, the ferocius violator of a lady's chastity: Contemplate these illustrious examples of royal crime. These ought, with much greater reason, to have been led disgracefully in triumph than Gentius, the King of Illyria,—than the son of Gotys, the King of Thrace,—than Bituitus, King of the Gauls,—or than Telitobotus, King of the Teutones. Wherefore did ye look on, with wicked gladness, on beholding Zozima, the aged Queen of Armenia, attached to the car of Pompey,—and, at the same time, the family of the unfortunate Tigranes, and the seven sons of Mithridates the Great, and Oltaces, King of Colchis, and Aristobulus, King of the Jews, and the Princesses of Scythia, and other princes and magnates in so great a multitude in that triumph, that their number amounted to three hundred and twenty-four. Wherefore was it a delightful spectacle for you to behold here the sorrowing Arsinöe, the sister of Cleopatra, and the sons of that Queen, who, by her voluntary

death, removed herself from such a cruel festival, and that royal youth, Juba?

How came it to be a glorious boast of thine, O Octavian, the condemning to death, after thy triumph, Adiatoriges, the Tetrarch of Gallogræcia, his wife, and their infant son? And thou, O Julius, the Dictator, since thou wert possest of a great and generous mind, does it not now grieve thee, that Vercingatorix, Prince of the Gauls, who gallantly defended his people against thy usurpations, after the ferocious pomp of thy triumph, should have been put to death in prison like a malefactor? Alas! splendid acts of iniquity, and proud misdeeds of tyranny. Most assuredly fame is alike unjust and foolish in her judgments, since she exalteth works of abomination, and blazoneth them forth with all the rumours of applause; while so many inventors of the commodities of life and of science, and of numerous other good and virtuous actions, are left forgotten in silence and oblivion."

At these remarks, the Spectres of the Triumphers trembled, and Cæsar exclaimed:—"O garrulous descendant! thy life must needs be be passed in vile sloth, since thou entertainest

such a cowardly horror of the splendid pomp of war. What, therefore, do ye perform worthy of remembrance, since ye esteem as infamous that reward of noble darings, that marvellous ceremony which excited our minds to defend and extend the dominions of our native country? For if this appear to you to be a work of evil, what and where are thy virtues?"

And I answered:—"Behold your statues, which we have dug up from the bosom of this earth, and contemplate your divinities, and the images of illustrious men, carved by the Greek chisel. Look upon your urns and their epitaphs, and all your monuments, preserved by us with so much care. And although all your actions are not praiseworthy, yet a great portion of them are, whence we are admirers of your grandeur, although it was mixed with atrocity. We, therefore, while contemplating these relics, saved from destruction, experience in our minds a degree of sorrow mingled with pleasure, it being a delightful exercise of the imagination to return back in idea to your times. Hence we observe with wonder these marble resemblances of persons, who were celebrated amongst you, either by

means of the sword or the stylet, or from their viscissitudes of fortune. Each individual relic of your age we here collect together with the greatest care and expence, avenging, as far as is permitted to us by fate, the outrages effected by time.* For whereas you plundered Greece of the divine works of her artists, and brought them hither more from ostentation than real taste; so we, on the contrary, esteem them so highly, that we use every effort to recover even their mutilated fragments from the entrails of the earth, where they have been entombed by the force of bygone earthquakes, or the idleness of ignorance. Behold there the statues of Rome, and of the Tiber, with the royal twins, and the celebrated she-wolf. Regard, O Dictator, thy own statue, and thine also, Octavian, with the prow of a ship at its feet, from whence we have conjectured, that it was sculptured to commemorate the victory at Actium, that last day of Roman liberty, and the first of thy successful tyranny. In these fragments of immense colossal statues, erected to the tyrants, thy successors, contemplate the emblems of their pride, and the debasement of the Romans."

So saying, I ascended the staircase, and the Spectres followed me in pensive silence, winding along according just as I directed their steps; and, elevated with delight at filling so dignified a station, I continued:—

"View here, O ye worthies! depicted by us on these walls, these your memorials, and more exquisitely expressed, unless I am deceived, than they could have been executed during your own times. For the sword was your only occupation, or, in other words, that of destruction, whilst ye abandoned to your slaves, as mean and inglorious, all the arts of peace."

The Spectres then turned round to survey the painted walls of the spacious building, and I held my tongue, conceiving that there was no need of words to describe those famous deeds which the pallet had so well depicted. Nor was my conjecture vain, for the shades rushed on in gladness, whispering to each other as they recognized in succession, Romulus and Remus, and Faustulus, and Numa, who was represented sacrificing, attended by the Vestal Virgins, and the Rape of the Sabine Women, and the bloody war with the Vejentines, and the marvellous affection and patriotism of the

three twin-brothers, the Horatii and Curiatii. Then, in the adjoining saloons, the glad acclamations of the incorporeal multitude were excited anew, on beholding Mutius Scævola burning his right arm on the altar, and Horatius Cocles at the broken bridge, and Brutus intrepidly looking on at the mortal agonies of his two sons in the hands of the lictors.

"Look here, O Dictator!" said I, on seeing him in the throng close around me. "Behold this bronze statue of the she-wolf. We are told in history, that, upon thy death, a flash of lightning fell upon its foot. Remark here the impression left upon the metal."

He contemplated with surprise these ancient trophies, preserved by us with so much respect. It seemed as if his feelings were too deep to be expressed in words, so that he remained fixed and mute in a grave and complacent attitude. Next, the Spectres proceeded to contemplate on the walls Hannibal ascending the Alps, and the Punic Wars, both by sea and land, and they seemed to pant for glory as they looked on, and even yet to feel hostility towards their ancient rival. But when they had in some measure satisfied their cu-

riosity, they surrounded me, and individually proposed numerous questions. To which I returned such answers, as my long research in ancient history enabled me. Then, quitting that building, I conducted the crowd to that which is opposite, and in which are preserved the relics of sculpture.

But first Marcus Tullius paused a while to peruse the modern Latin inscription at the entrance, and said:—"Gracious, indeed, and fortunate is the title of those who now govern our native country!"

Then he entered, and beholding several others similar to it, wherein are displayed the surnames derived from Clemency, and Innocence, and Piety, he considered them expressive of the public regard for these several qualities, and much more praiseworthy than those of Africanus and Numantinus acquired by real deeds of blood. Then I continued:—

"Behold, here are your tombs covered with sculptured images, and lapidary inscriptions, interpreted by us with great pains and study from the perusal of ancient volumes. Insatiable time hath long since consumed your mortal relics;—

but your immortal spirits yet remain, and your renown is immortal as they."

"Frail and transitory is the composition," replied Tullius, "of that frame which shrouds thee, and fleeting are the moments of its duration, and even during that, sleep and disease, and weariness, usurp a large portion. You, therefore, who are still enslaved in such a prison, may call it life;—but to us it appears to be death. Wherefore, be not grieved, as at some affliction, at the dread of being severed from thy bodily covering, for then thou wilt become free, like us, to expatiate far and wide throughout an intellectual existence, and be no longer subjected to the tyranny of time. And although they now appear to us as wretched and contemptible all those things which here appeared to be great and wonderful when upon earth, yet proceed thou to point them out to us, our contemplative substance being evermore insatiable after the acquisition of all learning."

While thus he spoke, we had reached that hall, in which are assembled the images of those who had been renowned in this world from their philosophy and eloquence. At the marble aspect

of these famous countenances the murmur of the crowd was hushed of a sudden into profound silence. Then, with surprise mixed with reverence, they appeared to approach and contemplate these well preserved memorials of illustrious men. And I, in order to prove that our age was neither illiterate nor unworthy of their esteem, pointing out each by turn, said:—

"Behold the incomparable Socrates, who corrected with so much wisdom the presumption of mens' minds, by demonstrating the vanity of numerous doctrines. He merely, by means of modest doubtings, taught a more instructive philosophy than all the others, by the enunciation of their arrogant opinions. These lips, from which flowed the purest streams of eloquence, and excellent doctrines of virtue, were doomed at length to sip the juice of hemlock, by a sentence still condemned as execrable. This, again, is he who handed down to posterity his life and writings in so divine a style, thy own Plato, O Tullius! from whose celestial eloquence thou didst derive, as from a limpid fountain, the purest waters, with which thou didst irrigate thy flowery meadow. Such a pen could alone console us for the silence

of his master (Plato), who, although so generous in the dispensation of his doctrines during his lifetime, was yet so niggardly of them towards posterity, that he did not leave them a single volume. O sacred silence! compared with which how tedious and profane was the noisy clamour of so many speculations diffused throughout Greece."

Tullius listened to me with great complacency, apparently well satisfied with these my free opinions; wherefore, I said to myself,—"Since he appears to be satified with my discourse, who will presume to find fault with it." Proceeding, therefore, with greater boldness, I added:—

"Some of you, no doubt, are acquainted with this declaimer of pompous doctrine, and hypocritical tutor of a ferocious tyrant." While I spoke, I pointed with my finger to the wrinkled countenance of Seneca, and proceeded:—"We are perplexed in forming an opinion as to thy death, because the arrogant, but contradictory writings of thy base manners leave us in doubt, whether we ought to commiserate thy latter end, or to consider it as well merited by thy crouching adulation."

Then turning myself towards another bust, I

said:—"Behold a Monarch who reigned here long after the downfall of the Republic, but with so mild and wonderful, and almost paternal sway, that his name is still commemorated with eternal good will. Oh fortunate city where the despot is a sage! for, without any obstacles, he may bestow at pleasure his benevolent dispensations."

Then turning myself round towards the outer court, I pointed out the equestrian statue placed there, and added:—"Contemplate there his merciful countenance. Mark how he extends his right hand, and seems to govern with delightful sway a happy people!" Then Brutus presented himself before me, and demanded with an air of severity, "Who was he?"

And I answered:—"He was a namesake of thine, and was called Marcus Aurelius, Emperor of the Romans. He is enrolled amongst noble writers, because he produced some volumes not the least valuable of his reign, composed of those pious opinions, and those high-minded doctrines, which he embodied in practice."

Brutus remained pensive for a time, with his eye-brows knitted together, and his eyes fixed upon the ground, and then exclaimed:—"If he was

really just, as thou hast describest him, wherefore did he not restore the usurped government?"

I answered:—"Because the remembrance of the ancient forms being altogether effaced, it would have been a mischievous innovation to have recalled the former order of things."

Then said Brutus with severity:—"Men are at all times capable of governing themselves whenever they proceed forward, wisely instructed, to enter on so noble a deliberation. Wherefore, the flatterers of tyranny, with their hireling and profligate doctrines, maintained even in our times, that one single will was necessary, and that all power should emanate from a single head:—frightful opinions, fatal and disgraceful, and the effusions rather of madness than of sound reason. For how must a magnanimous understanding, sincerely trained in the contemplation of whatever is true and honourable, and virtuous, scout the very idea, that the fate of vast regions, and an innumerable multitude of human beings, should be submitted in all things to the impulses of his caprice.

"It is in the very nature of a good mind to be afraid of its own errors, and the impulse of its own passions, and to doubt with becoming modes-

ty of its own sufficiency; and in a matter of such paramount importance, as that of controlling the happiness of our fellow mortals, shall a single haughty crowned juggler believe that his own powers alone are all-sufficient for so arduous a task,—make merry, and boast with unhallowed joy in the possession of so vast and difficult an authority?"

I said with submission:—"In that particular period of time, when that monarch reigned, every one felt delighted, that, in his person, goodness was united with absolute power, because never was man so deserving of it as he proved himself; and, assuredly, he reigned not for his own individual benefit, but for that of his subjects, rendering virtue and justice all-powerful and triumphant, and showing himself subjected to their authority. Himself the first vassal of his own sceptre, and the master of his own passions, he invited others, by his individual example, to yield a prompt and useful obedience. All the cares of empire he took upon himself, while to those under his merciful sway, he only left the advantages of his rule."

"Since then he was as thou hast described

him," replied Brutus;—"tell me to whom did he transmit the sceptre?"

And I answered, "To his son."

Brutus added, "What disposition did he display?"

I was constrained to answer,—"That of a tyrant, and as a tyrant he did reign."

"You perceive then," concluded Brutus, "whether a sincere good will for mankind ought not to have induced him to re-establish a free empire, in order that the lot of so many nations might not have been committed to the casual inheritance of future tyrants. For he not only exposed men to the inevitable corruptions of arbitrary power, but, with a full fore-knowledge of their cruel destiny, entrusted them to the well known disposition of his ill-disposed son."

I answered:—"All traces of a Republican form of government having been lost amidst a series of vicissitudes, and having taken refuge finally in the arms of a single person, by way of repose, the whole machine of the empire would have been utterly destroyed had his authority been diminished. Nothing is more tremendous than when men are set loose from the restraint under

which they exist. Repugnance to obey is ever on the alert, and but scarcely restrained by laws and force of arms. Neither can strict and absolute government be widened and relaxed like a garment. Therefore, I esteem him a sage who inculcated it as a maxim to refrain from attempting that deceitful degree of perfection, lest more frightful disorders should be occasioned thereby than even tyranny itself."

At these words, Brutus withdrew amongst the throng somewhat indignant, and I remained vexed at having ruffled so mighty a spirit. But Tullius, comforting me, said:—

"Thou art well aware how austere is his virtue. It will ever be difficult to decide, whether in him love for his country, or hatred against the oppressor, was the prevailing passion. Proceed, however, in thy train of discourse, because thou mayst remark how kindly it appears to be received."

I then, seeing Horace near me, and facing me the marble bust of Pindar, proceeded with fresh spirits:—"This is he who was thy guide in the sublime flights of thy lyric muse. Fortunate, indeed, is thy lot, in being even at this moment in

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the hands of all civilized nations, and dear to every refined and delicate mind. Thy divine verses and splendid sentiments are constantly on the lips of all the learned. No generation will ever desist (unless, indeed, barbarism should extinguish every sense of beauty) from quaffing the intoxicating beverage of thy poesy."

While I thus spoke, the mists of death seemed to be removed from the countenance of the Venusian poet, and he looked wistfully upon me, as if, even in the realms of death, he was affected agreeably by these sincere effusions of praise.

"This," I continued, "is the blind and marvellous father of all song, the sweet and inexhausted fountain of eloquence, to which all those have approached, and ever will approach, who aspire to the arduous style of majestic simplicity. Whoever can read thee, O thou divine inventor of beautiful poetry!—whoever can peruse, without a thrilling emotion, the wrath of thy heroes, the discord amongst the divinities, the grief of Achilles, the prayers of Priam, the complaints of Thetis, can have no heart within his breast of steel.

"Behold, now, the Lesbian nymph, she whose

gentle and affecting sorrows still excite our tears, as we see them expressed in the moving accents of her lyre. Behold, O Tullius! thy Lysias, and here, too, is Demosthenes, that powerful torrent of all-reasoning. Surely, thou wouldst have been the first of orators, had not Marcus Tullius entered into competition with thee. Behold that, which with us, according to fallacious conjectures, appears to be thy bust, illustrious Tullius! and it grieves me much that this thy incorporeal shade, which I trust preserves the likeness of thy bodily form, should be so unlike to this marble, that thy expression of physiognomy, so much coveted by all, should be entirely lost. Remark, here also is Archimedes, whose sepulchre thou didst discover with so much joy, whilst thou wert questor in Sicily." Thus I proceeded from one to another, pointing out the several monuments, until we arrived in the next saloon, where are collected together the busts of the Emperors and their families.

Here the Republican spectres asked me what these heads were; and I satisfied their curiosity, by narrating as accurately as my memory would permit, the successive Emperors, their stormy

reigns, and uncertain domination, their abominable dissoluteness, the infamous vileness of the Romans, and the atrocious madness of the tyrants. Wherefore, on hearing the odious vicissitudes of their oppressed liberties, the dreadful scenes of carnage and revolution, the Quirites became overwhelmed with grief, and vented their sorrow and indignation in frequent sighs. Many amongst them proudly proclaimed themselves fortunate, in having descended to their tombs long before that dreadful era; others, with bitter sneers, taunted their descendants, at having submitted to endure such injuries, so much worse than death; others, muttering between their teeth words of menacing import, appeared even in death to enter into a solemn conspiracy, and to vow eternal enmity to tyrants. So that they even proceeded to inflict marks of vengeance on their busts, and attempted to demolish them; but, like vapour, their blows fell harmless upon the firm and solid marble,—being perfectly unable to accomplish the vengeance they contemplated, from the tenuity of their spiritual frames.

Then the tumult increased beyond all bounds, as the spectres gathered round to contemplate the

celebrated Royal Law, sculptured on a large sheet of bronze, because, in that they perceived, as accumulated in the hands of the Emperors, all the powers which had been at one time distributed amongst the people and the Senate, and the division of which had occasioned so much jealousy and strife. But, upon that tablet, with pompous cowardice, and a servile display of words, they read, with bitter sarcasms, the supreme honours conceded to the tyrants, and the most ample extension of power, not granted as to a man liable to the common weaknesses of human nature, but as if he were an all-wise and all-perfect celestial being. Then Marcus Brutus presented himself in front of that bronze, in an indignant attitude, fixing upon it his deep-seated eyes, still filled with illustrious daring, and exclaimed:—

"Wherefore do ye offend with vain blows the invulnerable marble? Better were it to have risked yourselves when in life against tyranny, than thus, in death, to storm with the foolish desire of tardy vengeance. Behold how ye left to your posterity the vile inheritance of the yoke; and in such a long series of tyrants, I marvel not that there was not even one who was tolerable,

because unbounded power breaks out into the most extravagant actions. But since ye are so indignant against these, the usurpers of your liberties, wherefore did ye not, when I had put to death the Dictator,—why did ye not, I say, then follow me, when I declaimed, but in vain attempted to revive in you that sacred flame? But the great majority of you, in love with slavery, followed the pernicious defenders of tyranny, while the select few came after me, far from that contaminated native land, to fight and fall, and I know not that I should lament it, upon the plains of Philippi."

His implacable soul seemed now enraged, and ready to disturb the spectres, but I, who had been appointed the leader of these nocturnal peregrinations, calmly said:—

"Peace! O Marcus, thou plainly perceivest that I am still clothed in the flesh, and that my spirit is subject to all its infirmities. Alas! have compassion on me, who am deeply afflicted at observing thy wrath, upon whom the appearance of so many fierce disembodied spirits, against whom human strength availeth nothing, causes a certain inconceivable bodily tremor. Consider that

I am here your guest, and that I have been led hither, reposing the deepest confidence in the generosity of your valour; and since the greatest minds are ever the most merciful, I trust, with confidence, that ye will not terrify me with your unhappy quarrels, but listen to me with complacency."

Upon these words, like a breezeless expanse of ocean, Brutus became calm and gentle towards the humble, in like degree as he was fierce towards the haughty, extending to me his exterminating hand, he said:—

"O gallant man! honourable are thy words! Ah me! pity for my native country still lives immortal in my spirit, rather than anger against its oppressor; nevertheless, my ancient feelings were excited upon viewing these images, more deserving of being buried under ground than placed here in the triumphal light of the Capitol."

So saying, he stalked forth from the building with a slow step, as if unwilling any longer to behold their countenances. I followed his footsteps, and close behind me followed all the throng of spectres. Then Brutus stood still in the court,

leaning himself pensively against a column; and, after a short silence, said to me:—

"Proceed, I beseech thee, O generous descendant, in thy interrupted discourse, for we are anxious to listen to thee."

Then the assembled ghosts dispersed themselves around the courts, some seating themselves on the bases of columns, others lying along the grassy turf, others stretched out upon the various monuments, but all intent upon listening to me with fixed attention. Wherefore, in prosecution of my discourse, I exclaimed:—

"Behold here, O ye magnanimous Romans, your hill, after all the outrages of so many ages, still highly adorned, splendid and celebrated by all nations. For although these edifices are neither of ample dimensions, nor composed of marble, as those were which ye erected, still they are well deserving of your admiration. Because Rome, no longer the great plunderer of nations, less magnificent, but more just, hath its Campidoglio accommodated to its present fortune, and no less than yours,—wonderful and eternal! Hither are no longer led oppressed kings, and queens grieving, with a train of weeping children, but

here are deposited the perpetual monuments of distinguished learning. In this hall, consecrated to peaceful studies, upon certain days, with imposing ceremonies, adapted to excite the exercise of talent, our worthy magistrates, clothed in their robes of purple, distribute, with their own hands, fitting rewards to the professors of liberal arts. All civilized nations, come hither from the remotest countries, to bear a part in this delightful triumph. This is now become the eternal seat of the muses, where, with joyful rites, these peaceful magistrates bind around the brows of their votaries new crowns, such as were never prized by you. Here a rare and delightful talent, like magic, of forming, without any premeditation, the most melodious verses, as also the extraordinary gift of producing heroic poetry, obtain the laurels of immortality. Many amongst you, in a short series of years, snatched here crowns of blood: amongst us, in a long lapse of time, but few have attained those of peace. Hence, we see how much more easy it is to exterminate mankind, than to contribute to their delight. Not brows undaunted by wide-spread desolation are here adorned with garlands, but those upon

whom a celestial ray hath descended, which hath imparted to their minds the gift of producing sweet and harmonious poetry. These delightful inspirations take possession of our minds, and dilate our hearts to the noblest impulses. Now, then, if ye estimate the affairs of mortals at their just measure and value, and if ye duly consider justice and virtue, divested of the tyranny of opinion, assuredly you must be rejoiced that there now exists here so honourable and delightful an imitation of your atrocious triumphal ceremonies. Contemplate that mummied head, placed in that hall. It is not the trophy of a fallen enemy, nor of your superstitions respecting a human head said to have been found originally upon this spot, and which gave it its appellation; for this is the pleasing but melancholy memorial of a divine painter, who existed here upwards of two centuries ago, and which we preserve as one of the triumphs of death." Whilst I thus spoke, I heard a voice sounding as if from the internal recesses of the hill, and which seemed to call in mysterious words upon the shades; and they, as if in obedience to the unexpected summons, disappeared on a sudden in the empty air. I re-

mained overwhelmed with astonishment, with the words half pronounced on my lips. The hill remained deserted, and the stars faded away, while Aurora extended her twilight—the aversion of the spectres. I therefore went my way, but the impression remained indelible which had been produced by these conversations."

NIGHT FIFTH.

NIGHT FIFTH.

CONFERENCE FIRST.

The Forum—The Quirinal—and the Gardens of Sallust.

THAT impulse which excites our minds towards the future, and makes us anxious to find out coming events, in like manner drives it back upon the past, desirous to extract from the abyss of time those things which are there overwhelmed. Then the human understanding, no longer satisfied at being confined within its present narrow limits, dilates itself towards both extremes, aspiring at a vast empire, and ever desirous of enlarging its faculties, so that it may expand into unbounded meditations. Thus, whilst some are

wont to contemplate with astonishment the wonders of the heavens, and while the grandeur of the works of the Divinity makes their hearts thrill within them, others, in the silence of the muses, pass their nights in search of the sweetness of their harmonies; whilst others again contemplate with a pleasing melancholy the majestic ruins of fallen empires, and indulge themselves in conjecturing and investigating the dark labyrinths of antiquity. Thus, by different ways, the mind tends towards opposite pursuits, yet all display the innate longing to expatiate throughout the intellectual world, and to extend themselves through time.

But if there be any delight more great than all others in this world which we inhabit, assuredly it is that produced by invention. Witness those who have, by travelling, discovered unknown regions, or who have investigated by means of philosophising the hidden laws of nature; or made out new stars in the heavens, or new bodies, whether in animate or in uninanimated nature; or some of the resources of life. Assuredly these persons have tasted of the most exquisite

delight with which the human mind can become intoxicated.

I had become a partaker in those delights which I had so long and ardently coveted. Not that I had made a discovery of any fragment of an ancient volume, or of a monument, or unknown statue, or medal, which are certainly very agreeable inventions, but I had conversed freely with many of the most illustrious men of the most valiant of the nations of antiquity. Therefore, I can scarcely fail of imparting to others some portion of the delight which I myself have experienced, notwithstanding the mediocrity of my style of writing.

In prosecution, therefore, of my interrupted narration, I will say, that scarcely had the night extended its dusky veil, so propitious to secret prodigies, before I became anxious to return to the spot where the spectres had disappeared in the morning. And just by the foot of the Capitoline Hill, as it slopes towards the Comitia, I found them already assembled around the majestic ruins of the Forum of Nerva. As I passed from that arch of it, which still displays the magnificence of the edifice, a spectre murmured forth,

indignantly, turning himself towards the three columns of Parian marble, the ruined remnant of the portico:—

"Who destroyed the inscription on the freize?"

And I answered:—"Be appeased, because the block of that marble, as being precious, was employed to adorn (two centuries ago) that most splendid fountain on the Janiculan Hill, whose copious streams form one of the most distinguished ornaments of this city."

And he, scornfully regarding me, said:—"And had ye no other marble, by any chance, in your mountains, that you should thus have destroyed our monuments?"

Then, indignantly, he hid himself amongst the crowd. Meanwhile the multitude of spectres appeared to regard in silence these vast ruins, and at times gave vent to sighs. After I thought they had, in a degree, satisfied their curiosity, I turned myself towards the valley which separates the Capitol from the Quirinal Hill, and they followed close behind me, like a flock guided by their shepherd. Lo! on a sudden, there appeared in sight that wondrous column, the splendid relic of their ancient glory. Tullius, Pompey the

Dictator, and all of those illustrious persons who had lived prior to that era, demanded of me when, and by whom that lofty monument had been erected. Wherefore I became now their instructor, in their latter history, as I had been heretofore their modest listener to that of their early times. Octavian was amazed at the prodigious elegance of that work, as if he conceived that he had left Rome in so splendid a state that none of his descendants could have added to its embellishment. Tullius wondered how inexorable time had respected the proud monument, which appeared to rise up in defiance of its ravages; and, as being now privy to the secrets of nature, he pronounced this his native soil fortunate, in having, for such a lapse of ages, sustained, without being overthrown by the force of earthquakes, this sublime and single column, which has no other support than its own solid weight. Cæsar, pacing slowly round it in silence, regarded it with delight, and appeared, by the expression of his countenance, to praise greatly an object such as had never been beheld in his own times, and which, besides its novelty, seemed so admirably adapted for preserving the eternal memory of

celebrated deeds. Cato, he that disdained to survive the overthrow of his country, beheld with a severe look the august trophy, and, with a bitter sneer, perused the inscription upon the pedestal. Then he asked me:—

"Who was that Trajan to whose deeds Rome had proved herself so flattering, and to whom she, that heretofore had been such a despiser of monarchs, had erected such an immense structure?"

And I, with great sincerity, recounted to him the illustrious enterprises of that ever glorious emperor, in whose hands supreme power seemed to have been an universal benefit. But the haughty spirit regarded me, and then said:—

"These are but the sentiments of servility. Assuredly such a structure is an eternal memorial of the baseness of my posterity. While Rome was in life, and its virtue enjoyed freedom, honourable rewards were assigned to great enterprises: whereas here I behold only the pompous memorials of warlike successes."

In the meanwhile, the others contemplated with wonder the beauty of more than two thousand sculptured images, expressed in all the various attitudes of war, with the dresses and habits of

nations not yet known in their days. Nevertheless the wish to ascend the adjoining Quirinal Hill became prevalent, so that the multitude, murmuring out their wishes, proceeded towards it. But when they had arrived there, and perceived no remains of the celebrated Temple of Romulus, and of the vast Baths, and that, from amidst such destruction, two colossal figures were all that had escaped, the spectres groaned, and looked around them on all sides, in sorrowful silence. And although the spot was adorned, and upon the ruins whose loss they were deploring, there arose several magnificent palaces, yet all that did not seem to moderate the affliction of their minds. Therefore, finding that all I could say to them did not moderate their grief, I proceeded along the brow of the hill towards the ancient Porta Collina. There the spectres looked towards their left hand, endeavouring to discover in the valley between the Pincian and Quirinal Hills, the celebrated Circuses of Flora and Sallust, and the beautiful gardens of that illustrious Roman. But observing nothing but a few ruinous walls which are still standing, sad memorials of the ravages of time and of fortune, they

then commenced sending forth their sighs, like that of the rushing of the winds through the forests.

Then I said:—"Behold here these ruins, which we preserve with care, as being the remains of the luxurious enjoyments of your admirable writer, Caius Crispus, although time hath consumed these. Yet, superior to its ravages, are surviving amongst us his immortal, though brief writings, characterised by a style so lofty and severe."

At these words, there presented itself, issuing forth from the crowd a ghost, armed in steel, and, lifting up his vizor with his right hand, displayed to me his countenance, wasted and pallid, and said:—

"Who art thou, who, after so many revolutions of time, doth here pronounce my name with so much commendation?"

And I, well knowing from such a salutation, that this was Sallust himself, contemplated the rigorous countenance, and marvellous aspect of so celebrated a man, and then modestly answered:—

"I am, as thou perceivest, a spirit clothed in

frail clay, but yet desirous of high communing with those of incorporeal nature."

He then fixing upon me his look, not without admiration, mingled with good will, said:—

"Short is this thy peregrination, yet thou dost well to proclaim boldly thy sentiments."

Then casting down his looks, in a pensive attitude, after a short pause, he asked:—

"Then ye preserve my volumes?"

"Yes," said I, "with diligence."

And he added:—"Name them; so that I may know whether you are thoroughly conversant with them."

And I said:—"The History of the Jugurthan War, and of the Conspiracy of Catiline."

Then I stopt; and he remained silent, as if expecting that I would name some more. But observing that I said nothing, he again interrogated me:—

"And my History of the Republic, from the death of Sylla till the conspiracy of Catiline."

And I calmly answered:—"Of that nothing, except only a very few fragments have been wafted down to us by the waves of time, and we still disconsolately deplore its loss. Now, if thou, as

being a spirit, hast a memory no longer shackled by the flesh, set in motion with thy immortal voice this midnight air, and commit to the custody of my ears thy celebrated work. I with my pen, obedient to thy dictation, am ready and indefatigable to commit it to writing. How fortunate would be my lot, if, in returning to the superior light of the sun, I could carry with me so precious a gift. By thy means I should certainly live for ever, endeared in the memory of mankind. For, now, be it known to thee, that a glorious Queen, who governed about two centuries ago in the remote island of Britain, committed to her own language these thy works, laying down for a time her sceptre, that she might grasp the stylet, and lay open to the admiration of the vulgar, the admirable sentences contained in thy two volumes. And even at this day, a royal Prince of Iberia has translated them into his own language, from the same illustrious motive."

Cæsar, the Dictator, who had listened somewhat gladly, said:—

"O becoming employment for a royal hand!"

And the remembrance of my studies being

awakened within me, by that noble exclamation, and turning myself towards him, I said:—

"Now, then, I address myself to thee, Dictator."

He answered:—"I hear thee."

And I added:—"Thou oughtest to be still more rejoiced than he, because not one royal hand, but two, and both of them kings of the Gauls in these latter ages, have translated into their idiom thy Commentaries of their wars; and, indeed, so immortal and fresh is thy renown, that nothing of thee has been consumed by time, excepting only thy frail mortal tenement."

The spectres were rejoiced at this agreeable yet true intelligence; and they seemed then both disposed to interrogate me respecting the names of these monarchs, and of the events which had occurred in those regions. When Marcus Brutus, who had listened to us in silence, with great gravity raising his head, exclaimed:—

"Oh vain joy, and unworthy of Roman spirits! What praise, or what glory is it, that your works should be prized by tyrants, who are never pleased with the voice of truth?"

Tullius said, with gentleness:—"Only the

greatest and most distinguished works survive the wreck of time; neither for many ages past have any volumes been opened in the presence of royal pupils, unless they are adorned with memorable sentences. Because, without great fame, and long established authority, monarchs are not to be induced to turn their eyes to the reading of any work;—so that rarely does the rumour of any works, however glorious, approach the foot-stool of their throne."

Marcus Brutus was calmed, as if subdued by the friendship of the orator. Afterwards, with such a smile as scarcely appeared upon his extenuated and severe countenance, pointing with his right hand towards Sallust, who stood near, he said:—

"Behold there an author, worthy to have a tyrant for a reader; because, a hypocrite as to what was honourable, he was dissolute, rapacious, a mere pretender to virtue, sincere only in his vices. His volumes are filled with exalted sentiments, and his habits were distinguished by infamy. While describing, with his illustrious pen, your corruptions, he could not however conceal his own; for which cause, being degraded from

his Senatorial seat, he lavished upon these gardens the rapine he collected during his Prætorship in Numidia."

At these vehement words, the spectre vanished, flying from the authoritative reproof of the irreproachable Marcus. And I lamented with myself, in vain, that Sallust had not imparted to me, as he seemed inclined so to do, some portion of his much regretted history. The crowds then proceeded along the Quirinal, inclining to the left, like smoke impelled by the breeze, towards the Porta Collina. Some murmured, as remembering that it was by this gate that the plundering Gauls had entered, who had slain those aged Quirites, who, as hostages of their country, had remained upon their seats in the Senate, silently and majestically looking death in the face. Others recounted the extreme peril of the beseiged Tarpeian Rock upon that occasion; and then, with joy, extolled that wonderful virtue, whereby, intrepidly struggling against fortune, they had afterwards arisen more formidable and more fierce, after overthrows still more ruinous. Some recalled to mind, that at this same gate, and along these walls, the greatest of all the enemies of the

Roman name had approached, fired with the hope of destroying the city, and covering himself with glory, and that, in that part, he had audaciously hurled a spear, as if in signal of defiance and of approaching ruin. Then the spectres still shook at the detested name of Hannibal, while indignation flashed from their eyes, and rage suffused their countenances, each individual displaying their ancient desire of insatiable vengeance. Others interrupted them, by commemorating the valiant combat of Titus Manlius, upon the bridge over the Ania, at no great distance, and thither they turned their looks, debating amongst themselves as to the spot, the field, and the arrogance of the gigantic Gaul, and about his golden chain, which conferred upon the family of the Torquati their illustrious and eternal surname.

CONFERENCE SECOND.

The Vestal at the Campo Scellerato.

THE various and mingled voices in which the multitude murmured, produced a sound resembling the humming of bees, as we proceeded towards the place of punishment of those vestal virgins who had been unfortunately vanquished by the force of love.

The field was called Scellerato, or wicked, through horror of the crime, although it better deserved that title from the impious atrocity of the rite, and from the fatal rigour of the punishment. Then the noise with which they conversed having ceased, was suddenly succeeded by the most profound silence. At no great distance, were the shapeless ruins of a tomb, covered over with thorns, from which there issued forth a deep

groan, like that caused by a female in the agonies of death.

A feeling of pity struck a cold chill to my heart, as I observed the ghost of a young girl rising up from the ruined tomb. Her cheeks were florid, but suffused with tears, which appeared to flow from long dark eye-lashes; her looks were bent down on the earth.

And I said to Tullius:—"What wretched misfortune was attached to that female?"

He, extending his authoritative right hand, in token of silence, answered:—"She is now apparently inclined to address us, and relate the particulars of her story."

Slowly she approached; and after having surveyed us for a short time with timidity, sighing, she thus commenced:—

"You behold here, my compassionate Romans, Floronia, who, wretched that I am, was a diligent guardian of the perpetual fire; but within my heart there burst forth another flame, still more powerful; and deep, in this spot, I expiated, by a dreadful punishment, the fatal pleasures of love."

At these words she gave vent to a fresh burst of vehement sorrow. Her appearance was that

of a young girl, approaching to her twentieth year, in the very flower of loveliness, adorned with modest grace, and an air of the greatest decorum. Her long black ringlets were parted on her forehead, and descending from her expressive countenance, flowed negligently over her fine shoulders.

She paused for a while, as if to listen to the general expressions of commiseration, which seemed to give her comfort. Then raising her white hand, she gracefully implored silence; and having obtained it, she seemed to be a solitary object in the desert. Then she proceeded:—

"Alas, O Numa! thou who art still regarded as the wisest of sages, wherefore didst thou decree so barbarous a punishment against those breasts, which proved too frail to withstand the triumphal power of love. O tremendous rite! by which we were here cut off; possibly we alone may execrate thy venerated name. But since you here listen to me with so much attention, you might not be displeased to hear the particulars of my cruel story:—

"Before I was deputed to the sacred service, there used to come frequently to my father's

house a young man, son of an intimate friend of our family—graceful and gentle in his form and manners. His name was Lucius Cautilius. I, then a young girl, as was natural at that early age, accompanied him in all such amusements as are permitted to children; but amongst these was soon experienced somewhat of that melancholy, which is attendant on the first dawnings of love. A gentle thrilling at times began to pervade my limbs, which was thereafter succeeded by a sudden glow, which, rushing from my heart, exhaled itself on my cheeks, whilst my heaving breast was oppressed by desires and disquieting sensations hitherto unknown. So that, whenever Lucius quitted me, there remained a void, as if I had experienced some loss; and when I again beheld him, it seemed as if some portion of myself had been once more restored to me. While this flame was burning in my heart, I was destined, by the Pontifex, to the custody of that of Vesta—both, alas! never to be extinguished. I, during the first period of my chaste office, what with the novelty of the mode of life, what with the curiosity of witnessing those rites withheld from the knowledge of the vulgar, sus-

tained without misery the irreparable separation. Afterwards, the honours granted to the condition of the Vestal Virgins, the decorum, example, and sacerdotal discipline made me contented with my situation, and my time passed away, if not in happiness, at least in tranquillity, amidst these placid occupations.

"But, being one day with the other virgins, attending the games in the circus, I saw a youth, who, at no great distance from our particular seats, turned upon me his eyes with a longing expression. I withdrew my eyes from the arena of the circus, feeling but a feeble interest in the sports, and turned them upon that object, as upon the centre of their light. He continued to regard me with a fixed and affectionate appearance of doubt; and I also observed him with equal perplexity, as happens in such unexpected situations. It appeared to me, that he was my beloved Lucius; but the course of years had changed the sweet rosy look of boyhood into the more ripened and dignified aspect of youth. I was delighted with his piercing looks of regard, as was natural to a love-sick girl, whilst from my countenance I withdrew my veil, and presented

my features fully to his view, that he might gratify his curiosity. Then, when he looked again at my face, without any obstacle, he evidently showed, by the expression of his looks, that he no longer had any doubts as to my identity; for at first a slight degree of paleness, then a crimson blush, assured me of his deep-felt sympathy. Ah, troublesome decorum! which prevented two faithful souls from expressing their impetuous desires. These had already expanded to approach each other—our thoughts had already taken wing—now we had, in idea, interchanged mutual vows of fidelity and innumerable questions, but the rigorous majesty of my office restrained us both, not only from all words and open signs, but even from the most cautious regards and doubtful tokens. While my very soul was perturbed, I was obliged to preserve a gravity of demeanour; and although my heart was filled with joy, I durst not show even a smile upon my lips, because it was now an abominable crime, and to be followed, too, by a still more abominable punishment, to feel any love for that youth, whom I had before so innocently adored. But of what a subtle and penetrating substance is love, which

makes the remotest objects approach together, removes all obstacles, penetrates through space like the lightest breeze, and makes the soul of one individual so much the mirror of another, that it clearly discerns in it its most secret thoughts. The moments most propitious to us, were those during which the gazing multitude were intently applauding the struggle of the chariots nearest the goal, because it was then permitted to us to relax a little in our modest dissimulation. No one, however, can be so little acquainted with the sagacity of love, as to suppose that we paid any attention to the breaking of wheels, or the falling of horses, or the strife of the nimble racers, or the brawny wrestlers, because the minds of both, united in mutual accordance, no longer regarded any external objects. But the boisterous sports being now finished, every one rose up from the marble benches, and the dear object of all my regards disappeared amidst the crowd. Then I also, with the throng, and accompanied by the other virgins, quitted the Circus, now bearing in my bosom the cause of my destruction. And having returned to the custody of the perpetual embers, I turned myself to the goddess, and,

with dried fuel, while nourishing that flame venerated by the vulgar, I submissively prayed:—'Oh, most chaste goddess! whilst I preserve for thee this most holy flame, do thou protect me from that which is profane and pernicious, which I now am no longer able to extinguish.'

"A human and easy office is that of feeding with needful assiduity this fire, but to overcome, in the frail breast, the tyrannical force of love, is an arduous enterprize, unless assisted by the concurrence of divine grace. With similar prayers I continually repressed the troublesome ardour; and now the sacred service, which had till then appeared a delightful and contemplative state of repose, began to be irksome. Still I celebrated with cold repugnance the usual rites, an unhappy virgin, and filled with far other cares than those of the temple.

"In this way, I passed a sorrowful existence amidst tormenting anxieties, contrived, as frequently as was permitted to the dignity of my sacred of office of priestess, to attend all public spectacles, continually excited by the hope of again seeing Lucius; whilst he, also, stimulated by the same wish, let no opportunity escape of

looking for me in public. And as if love had taken especial care of these meetings, they were frequent;—still, however, we both longed for fresh opportunities.

"Ah, me! the feigned punishments of Tantalus were verified in my case; for I beheld in my troubled visions the beloved image, and, in fancy, extended my audacious arms towards it with unhallowed wishes. But the fleeting shadow disappeared with my dream, and I arose from my weary pillow deluded, and, sighing, filled my cell with profane lamentations. At times I even rushed out into the nocturnal air in the ample garden, dissipating my overwhelming anguish in a flood of tears and bitter lamentations. Never will I forget the night which preceded the Sextile Calends. For having, while passing through the Campus Martius on the preceding day, seen Lucius overcome by tormenting sorrow, I turned my slow steps towards the garden, that secret asylum where I could freely vent my sighs. The evening breeze played amongst the ascending spray of the murmuring fountains, and ruffled the watery contents of the cool basins; while the silvery rays of the moon fell trembling on their surface, and a

pensive silence invited the mind to placid contemplations. O dear objects! and sufficient to instil calm into a disturbed heart, but wearisome for that which is filled with the poison of love. Then the nocturnal planet shone for me as a funeral torch, the breeze blew reproachfully, disagreeable seemed the fountains, and mournful was the silence. And yet madly, at one time, I looked up towards the heavens, and supplicated that goddess, in whose service my humbled heart groaned;—then, at another, prostrating myself on the ground, I invoked the infernal deities, and called upon all the gods to bear witness, how vain, inconsiderate, and violent had been my virgin vows. Meanwhile, immersed in placid sleep, procured by the delicious stillness of the night, lay my virgin companions, whilst I in vain wished to be a partaker of it; so that, wearied with weeping, rather than watching, my eyelids were continually kept open, and my heart a prey to mortal anguish.

"Even yet, after the revolutions of so many ages, and no longer enveloped in mortal clay, I yet experience, in this my etherial soul, those glow-

ing thoughts, and am even yet perturbed by that long cherished and delightful reminiscence.

" On a sudden I heard the slight noise of a human footstep, which, advancing as by stealth, pressed upon the dry leaves, and made them rustle. At that moment the moon was concealed by a fleeting cloud, and by its uncertain rays I could just distinguish the image of a man silently approaching me, but it seemed to me to be a spirit returning amongst mortals, as we are at this present moment. The spot being surrounded by high walls, and the gates well guarded, the sanctity, too, of the cloister, and the punishment attached to their profanation, all tended to persuade me, that they were inaccessible and inviolable. Then I retreated with trembling steps, but my flight was impeded by the tremor of my limbs; and, at the same time, my voice choked me, so that I was disabled by terror and palpitation of my heart from shricking aloud. Meanwhile the image seemed hesitating lest it should disturb a timid girl, and remained in perplexity. But the breeze having dispelled the cloud and unveiled the moon, the face of nature was made apparent. I then saw that it was no

spectre, but a living man, who had entered into these recesses, I knew not for what purpose. He approaching cautiously with a slow voice, pronounced, "Floronia." Upon which agreeable invocation, I, becoming courageous, remained fixed with hope. He then came so near that I was able to recognize him, and said tremblingly:—

"'Ah, Lucius, what have you done?'

"At which words, he being no longer in doubt that he was addressing me, sprung forward and embraced me.

"At present I am unable to describe the frantic delight with which our minds were affected. Words, tears, sighs and groans, in delightful confusion, were poured forth to the placid breezes of the midnight. But speedily the remembrance of my rigid office having been recalled to mind, I repulsed the audacious stripling, and recollecting the decorum of my rites, and the terror of infamy, I was so much overcome by fear, that a cold chill pervaded all my members.

"Then, with angry reproaches, I chided Lucius for having, like a cruel seducer, by his too delightful snares, allured my simplicity, and brought me into the peril of an ignominious death; and

that so dreadful in its nature, that even the strongest mind could not contemplate it without horror.

"But he gently comforted me, by narrating how, through a subterraneous conduit, in which, during the age of the Tarquins, there had flowed a water-course, but which was now quite dry, and unknown to the vulgar, he had arrived here, as if guided by the sagacity of love, having discovered its entrance at the foot of the Palatine Hill, concealed by ivy and tangled bushes; and how, after long windings, he had at length come out by a safe and unexpected termination to his amorous enterprize; which way was still traditionally known by a few aged persons, as being one whereby, after many risks, it was possible to reach the cloister of the Vestals, and by which it was probable that some lovers had obtained an entrance.

"But the uncertainty of the report, and the difficulty of the undertaking, had almost buried all knowledge of it in oblivion. He being resolved to dare even death itself, in order that he might approach me closely for a single moment, would have descended not only within a dark passage, but even into abysses of still more apalling depth:

Then kneeling with submission at my feet, and embracing my knees, he bathed my hands with his tears, and, with insinuating bashfulness, subdued all my fragile resolutions. Alas! then it was that I, no longer anxious about myself, began to fear only for him. Repeatedly, therefore, did I implore him hastily to withdraw from the perilous interview,—and yet I hesitated when I considered by what a dangerous road he must return, and what a dreadful pang I should feel at the separation. Besides, I was anxious to hear from him all his past adventures, his present mode of life, the tidings of his family, his familiar habits, and the various events of his education; so that, amidst such a variety of news, and fatal delights of such a prohibited interview, that night, the conscious witness of all our delirious ecstacies, fled swiftly away.

"Now the birds began to warble, and to shake the dew from the leafy branches. The horizon was streaked with rosy splendour, and that breeze, which precedes the rising of the sun, began to blow. But we, plunged in fatal oblivion, were discovered by a rigorous virgin, already awakened by the cares of her office. Alas!

the tyrannical thraldom of these holy rites. She was struck with horror! Deadly pale at observing the profanation of the holy building, and trembling with superstitious fears, she momentarily expected the descent of some avenging thunderbolt. Then having awakened with loud cries all the rest, they run together, and, overcome by terror, immediately called upon the Priestesses, and the whole cloister resounded with fatal execrations. Then he rose up courageously, as became a gallant and generous lover, and threatened not to permit such treachery to escape unrevenged. Thereafter, moderating his indignation, he tried to persuade the frightened women to bury in silence the fatal adventure, and not to reveal it to the populace, so that the fame of the sacred place might not be compromised and exposed to public ridicule. Then calling the gods to witness, he promised to return by the same way, or by any other which might be pointed out as more fitting, and never again to disturb, by his presence, the holy dwelling, nor to utter a word about this most dreadful transaction. But the virgins remained in fatal silence, overcome

by divine terror, and covered their faces with their veils.

"The eyes of Lucius were large and azure, his hair auburn, flowing over a snowy neck, the roses flourished in his cheeks, which then were still more bright, his voice was soft and musical, and proceeded from the sweetest lips. Alas! why were they not persuaded?

"Then, however, the Pontifex arrived as called forth by some dreadful accident, deserving the most rigorous expiation. Upon a signal from the grave Priest, the lictors, who followed him, advanced, and with menacing acts surrounded Lucius, who, as fierce towards them as he had been just before supplicating to the virgins, preserved a magnanimous aspect. I, removed at that moment from his beloved presence for ever, and from these tranquil shades, green mossy bowers, and soft delights, was thrust into a prison by the lictors, where a stone was my only seat, straw my bed, with no other light but that of a dismal lamp, when there entered, to discourage with their presence, the ferocius guards.

"Then I was conducted into the presence of the Pontifex, who, seated on a majestic seat in a

splendid hall, adorned with sacerdotal insignia, with a grave and solemn voice, I being at this time loaded with chains, interrogated me without any commisseration as to the event which had happened. But I, wretched girl, was not so much grieved at my own misfortunes, as at the unknown fate of my Lucius, whom my mind already pictured as exposed to ignominious punishment; so that, rendered hardy by such tormenting suspicions, with tears and groans sufficient to move any breast, I entreated the pontifex to make me acquainted with his fate. He, like a cold rock, heard without pity my unavailing complaints, and after remaining for a time silent, ferociously exclaimed:—

"'Shameless and profane young woman, be silent, lest thy dissolute wishes bring down the thunderbolts of Jupiter from Olympus, where they are already collected for vengeance.'

"So saying, he arose from his gilded seat, turned on his heel, and quitted the hall, accompanied by the followers of this tremendous ceremony. But the dreadful executioners of the sentence then confined me still more straitly in my chains, which were now rusted with my tears,

and fetched a seat closed all around, in order that when I was placed in it, my groans might not be overheard by the pitying multitude. But that tyrannical invention was useless in suppressing my sighs, because oppressed by grief, and more than half dead, I had not sufficient breath left to put the air in motion by my cries. Then having in a short time arrived at this accursed spot, I was conducted into a subterranean prison, where, (being buried alive,) I was compelled to suffer many deaths in slow agony.

"Here stood the menacing Pontifex, who covered me with a black veil, the dreadful emblem of death; then stretching forth to my breast, in an angry attitude, his sacerdotal right hand, repulsed me from him, like an execrable victim. The lictors thereafter undid my fetters, so that I was not now free, but left a prey to maddening impulses of desperation. Then, according to the melancholy ceremony, they lighted a lamp, and left me a little oil to feed its flame, some straw to lie upon, and bread, water, and milk to support me. Every one thereafter went out, and the opening of the cell was closed with a heavy block of marble, as if it had been a

tomb. Ah me! what a dreadful noise was that which I heard at that lamentable moment. Several stones fell down in a heap at the entrance, thrown, as I conjectured, in order that every outlet might be closed to my last groans.

"Meanwhile a deadly blindness covered my eyes, and my trembling limbs giving way beneath me, I sunk upon the straw. Oh that I had then died suddenly! But after that I had recovered my scattered senses, I uttered imprecations against the barbarous punishment, the tyrannic office, the useless fire, and the complaints of outraged nature, and my unwary vows, but the idle air was alone conscious of my last expressions. Alas! even now, art thou resounding with them, thou abyss of death,—cave of mortal agonies,—thou gulf inaccessible to pity,—thou tomb of living desperation!—Sure am I that, if with you there still remains any feeling for the misfortunes of humanity, you must bewail my deplorable end; for what other comfort do the wretched request, except to have their miseries listened to with pity. And what agony can be greater than neither to have nor to hope ever to behold a human countenance, or any one to hear the tale of your

mortal desolation. But at length the force of my body having become too feeble to give expression to my anguish, I began gradually to sink away to my desired end. Wherefore instead of food did they not leave me in pity a friendly dagger, or some deadly poison? For as nature ever prompts even the wretched to support themselves, I observing near the pallid flame the nourishment destined to lengthen out my agonies, sipped a little water, as my throat was parched up with the sobs of death. I also fed the flickering flame with oil; for anxious as I was to descend into the abysses of death, yet I was afraid of remaining alive in that tomb without light:—When behold, on a sudden, there was excited in my breast a raging fit of madness; I leaped from that infamous spot, so vainly bathed with my tears, and with such a deliberation, as even now I approve, I dashed my forehead, with all the strength which remained in my limbs, against the wall—and fell. The darkness of eternity covered my eyes, and my soul lighted up with an inextinguishable flame, fled with a groan from my mortal body. But how many days I spent in agonies in my tomb I know

not, for tedious are the moments of pain, and when deprived of the light of the sun, hours pass away untold. Ah me, if any one amongst you all, in this ocean of eternity, have encountered that adored youth, for whose love I suffered death, for pity's sake reveal to me what was his destiny, and relate to me the manner of his death."

While the sorrowing damsel thus exclaimed, she, with the corner of her veil, wiped away the tears from her eyes, while upon her beautiful countenance pity was depicted in so sweet a manner, that it excited the compassion of every bystander. The air resounded with a deep lamentation, and, at the same time, there came forth from the crowd a spectre, which, turning itself towards the damsel, said :—

" Since thou wishest so much, O unfortunate young lady, to hear the sad intelligence, I, who lived at that period, can reveal it to thee, piteous as it is."

She then lifted her veil, wherein she had concealed her sorrowing countenance, and mournfully exclaimed :—

" Narrate whatever thou knowest, cruel as may

be the story, because it is impossible to make me more wretched than I now am."

The other answered:—"After that the priest had fulfilled towards thee his cruel office, he suddenly dragged forth into the Comitia the ill-fated youth, where, according to the atrocious custom, he himself, with his sacerdotal right arm, the inexorable minister of celestial wrath, struck him with rods, until he expired under the blows."

At these tidings Floronia fled away; and as she withdrew, she shook her head wildly, and the breeze agitated her scarf, and her cheeks, and dishevelled locks. The crowd remained in sorrowful silence, as if struck with tender amazement;—and I, who felt at her cruel lot, not only pity, but indignation, loudly exclaimed:—

"O dreadful rites! O disgraceful punishments, not so much to those unfortunates, but to yourselves. Assuredly that pride was truly Roman, wherewith ye branded other nations as barbarians, being of all savages, yourselves the most ferocious."

Then Marcus Brutus threw the hem of his garment over his face, covering himself, in token of sorrow.—Augustus smiled bitterly:—Cæsar

gazed at me without rancour;—and Tullius said to me:—

"Thou dost clearly perceive that we were more fortunate than good."

CONFERENCE THIRD.

At the Monte Sacro, where the Subject of Republics is Discussed.

But after the fair and sorrowing phantom had disappeared, the stillness caused by compassion ceased, and the buzzing multitude proceeded along the banks of the Anio, and in a short time came within view of that hill, at no great distance, which is called the Sacred Mountain; upon seeing which, the crowd wavered, as if driven about by the wind, excited by the pleasing recollection of their achieved liberty. But in the midst of all their gladness, Pompey, still conspicuously distinguished amongst the crowd by his martial aspect, severely broke forth:—

"Oh profane mountain, where, with Plebeian

triumph, tumultuous licentiousness prevailed against Patrician dignity."

The spectres murmurred in an angry manner at this sentence; but the great patrician, opposing his noble countenance to the audacity of the vulgar, haughtily proceeded:—

"Rabble, as incapable of obedience as of authority; now behold that hill, the fatal asylum of thy dissensions, but restrain thy foolish joy, because there that seditious magistrate being granted to thee, who, by his arrogance, disturbed all the orders of the state, the Republic was thereby dragged to inevitable destruction; for assuredly whoever considers the revolutions of this our native country, will perceive in it a clear example, that the populace is not fit to govern itself, being an assemblage of men vile by condition, wretched by necessity, and who have no other hope than in commotions. For which reason they take no delight in quiet and good order, as those do, who have no occasion to emerge to a more prosperous station in life, but are pleased with plunder, and all extraordinary revolutions in the conditions of men;—and as the jarring of so many contending and tumultuous

passions disturbs, like a tempest, all the orders of a state, so it happened in this city, which, with a wonderful code of laws, calculated for eternal duration, yet was, in a short time, reduced to throw itself into the arms of a single person, that it might rescue itself from the oppression of the populace.

" That person, however, behoved to be trained to the command, so that, to conclude briefly, it has been made manifest, from the examples of all times and places, that no state ever could last, or even have a commencement, except where the better orders bear sway."

Tiberius Gracchus here exclaimed :—" These are the opinions of a tyrannical patrician, who, from the pride of birth, disdaining the natural equality of men, would degrade the greater part of them to the state of a vile herd, and then boast himself of being their shepherd, not only to guide, but to fleece and devour them. Such is the rapacity of overwhelming ambition.

" Now, assuredly, whoever aspires to be numbered amongst the proud nobility, ought to utter declamations against the vulgar, and calumniate them just as he has done. But nature made, as

is manifest even to tyrants, all men equal, and every individual amongst them, although the very lowest in point of fortune, may yet be exalted in his manner of thinking; and those superior geniuses, who are attached to natural order, make not inequalities amongst men, but rather hate all those which have been introduced amongst them, either by means of fraud or force, or the insanity of fortune."

The other answered, without being discomposed by the opinions of the republican:—"If nature had formed, as thou deemest all men equal, it would have endowed them with equal powers, and certainly they are alike as to bodily formation; but, in regard to intellect, they are generally separated by wonderful intervals. Prudence, valour, integrity, shrewdness of wit, and eloquence, are most remarkable in some, whilst in many there is a deficiency of all these qualities, and they are often distinguished by the contrary imperfections. Therefore, nature herself hath instructed us, by these notable differences, that obedience is necessary from the worse towards the better. But if men are all equal in any respect, it is manifestly in this, that all are

desirous only of their own advantage, inclined to prefer themselves to others, readily disposed to vengeance, unmindful of benefits, and slaves to their own passions. So that these being so disposed, they cannot correct themselves, except by the intervention of those few, who, from the possession of virtue, are somewhat less imperfect; and this opinion becomes confirmed by examples; for you will not find in history a single republic so popular in its spirit, that in it the multitude pronounced in every principal object of power its free suffrage; or if there ever was such a state, it was not of long, but of short duration, for, as being a condition contrary to the nature of mankind, it must speedily fall into the most severe tyranny."

Then Tiberius, interrupting them, said:—"Nevertheless it behoves thee to know, that the wonderful Republic of Sparta endured full of glory and power for many ages, and that its inhabitants were so equal, that they had all the same quantity of land, and the same food at the public table."

Pompey replied:—"Thou hast with great truth called the city of Lycurgus wonderful,

which, from its own particular institutions, which were never imitated by any other state, enjoyed a lasting empire, and was universally honoured: But, upon a more attentive consideration of that constitution, it must be very easily apparent, that, in no other state, was liberty so proudly vaunted, or a greater degree of slavery existing in reality. Thou well knowest, that the Lacedemonian citizens were all born slaves of their native country; and being reared as such, for it they lived, and for it they died. And beginning, therefore, from thy own assertions, certainly that man is not free, to whom the public assigns a field, and who can neither increase his fortune, nor nourish himself as all other animals may do, with that food for which he feels an appetite, but is obliged to feed at fixed hours in common upon whatsoever is set before him by the magistrates. In that state there was none of the delightful harmony of the muses, nor any of those amusing diversions of leisure hours, or sweet contemplations, in which the mind can repose itself in silence, but only the discipline of arms and of bodily fatigue, in order to form a band of intrepid and indefatigable warriors, which is no doubt

a powerful occasion of all greatness, but which ought to be mingled with the enjoyments of peace. Thus, thy hardy Sparta was so much an enemy to all pleasure, that it even forbid the most innocent recreations; and, therefore, their lyre was not permitted to have more than seven strings. So that, if the prejudice in favour of its great wisdom did not in some measure warp the freedom of our opinions, possibly so great a degree of rigour would have been despised. There, however, the men were of iron, as was also their money—and adamantine, too, were their laws and their customs. Assuredly, every one would call that king a tyrant, who, as soon as a subject was born, should have the child brought into his presence, and, on observing any infirmity or defect in any of its members, should cause it immediately to be deprived of life. And yet such was the celebrated custom of Sparta, as if, by violating all the ties of nature, and of paternal affection, the country required only a material vigour of body, and could not derive to itself any advantage from the virtues of the mind, although these were seated in a feeble frame.

"Then, however, if the children were consi-

dered worthy of existence, they were subjected to a ferocious system of discipline, and were trained up in pain and blood; and at certain festivals in the temples, in the presence of their fathers, they were obliged to suffer dreadful beatings with rods, under which not unfrequently they expired. And, in order that none of the vices of barbarians might be awanting to thy Sparta, thou art well aware, that it was one of their principles to incite their youths to a habit of thieving, which was not only permitted, but praised, when it was performed with due dexterity. Now, then, I would ask, whether ever under tyrannical government, men were more universally wretched than those self-same Spartans, who were without arts, devoid of domestic affections, and without any other enjoyment than the fierce delights of battles, all which were fought only for the common good, while they were absolutely prevented from having any private gratification, being all instructed constantly to suffer death, but never to enjoy life?

"Still, however, if it were really necessary that so great a deprivation of every enjoyment should be suffered, in order that our country should be preserved, it might be endured by honourable citizens; but seeing that other nations

have grown up to extensive empire and greater glory, by means of more agreeable institutions, I am amazed how so odious an example should ever be adduced. Such a city appears rather a loathsome school of miserable men, than a free assemblage of citizens, brought together to pass their lives in happiness. Neither, indeed, was their lot better than that of wandering in the forests. And as civil society is ordained with a view of correcting the inconveniences of a savage life, whenever civil institutions become a greater annoyance to a man than if he had been free in his caves, then a city becomes a prison to him, rather than a retreat. But if such an empire was lasting, it was not because it was happy, nor ought thou only to require that a city should endure for ages, so much as that its inhabitants should be contented with their institutions.

"Thus, in considering the lot of nations, thou wilt perceive that good regulations are both rare and fleeting, whilst, on the contrary, bad ones are lasting and frequent; so that the most perfect constitutions become in a short time depraved, as happened to our own, and the most miserable are as it were eternal, as is the case with the barba-

rous monarchies of Asia. But I vainly study to prove, that the equality of conditions in Sparta was the cause of its infelicity, because, in point of fact, there was not any equality in it. It is not unknown to thee, that all the trades and arts, and all the culture of the fields, was left to the men conquered in war, called Helots, whose condition was a perpetual state of slavery. Now, as these were of necessity the great majority, and from time to time attempted to better their condition, they bathed in torrents of their blood those very fields, upon which they were become the beasts of burthen. So, then, it is apparent, that in such a state of things the citizens were the slaves of their native country, and the tyrants of the multitude."

Tiberius Gracchus stood listening with a grave countenance, and, after Pompey paused, he added:—"During my lifetime I was sufficiently instructed how well skilled tyranny is in the subtlety of its arguments, insomuch, that it has reduced even its wickedness into an illustrious code of learning." He said, and slowly withdrew.

But I did not endure, unmoved, that the haughty patrician should declaim so strongly

against republics, especially in the presence of the sons of the great Cornelia, who, in defence of liberty, had been so immaturely sent into the dark abyss of death. So that, having become now a partaker in some measure of their ancient courtesy, I boldly exclaimed:—

"And whence does it happen, that amongst you, ye spirits illustrious for your constant hatred of tyranny, such a declamation should take place, whereby republics should be thus held up to contempt? Now, then, be it known to you, that when your own was overthrown, like a frail giant, Italy lay oppressed; but in it the rumour of your fame was never extinguished, and even yet resounds in it like the trumpet of liberty. For the example of your republic remains, like a living image, which is a perpetual excitement of our thoughts. Then there arose in every city some imitator of your Brutuses, (names still great and tremendous) who, awakening his fellow-citizens from their lethargic slavery, excited them to live under the authority of laws only. And when, after a time, the animating spirit had been diffused throughout Italy, there arose several free governments out of the ruins of your greatness;

in which, although frequently contained within the walls of a single city, the image of your virtues was depicted in minature, amidst the most daring perils. However, these various and small republics proved of considerable duration, although they were agitated with continual storms, and even visited by invasions, and were always an invidious object to tyrants, who were attempting constantly to bring them under their dominion; and of these there are still existing amongst us some remains, worthy of your respect."

Whilst I was uttering these sentiments, two ghosts, of daring aspect, approached, and regarded me attentively, so that Tullius said:—

"Behold, at the sound of thy words, have assembled those two admirable citizens, Junius and Marcus Brutus, so that now to abet this harangue in favour of liberty, thou hast its best defenders to support thee. Proceed, therefore, in thy discourse, which, as thou mayst observe, is most agreeable to us all."

And being encouraged by this exhortation, turning myself around to this illustrious pair, I continued to narrate, in a compendious manner, the origin, revolutions, and destruction of our

republics; and how there still existed one, after a lapse of two centuries, on the sea-coast of Liguria, and another in the midst of Etruria, for above five centuries, and upon the Adriatic Sea a third had arisen, which had become its queen, the most august of all republics, and immortal, which, surpassing in its duration all those of antiquity, had almost doubled, in point of time, that of Sparta; having remained untouched by any sceptre for above thirteen centuries; and thus afforded a fresh example how much might be accomplished by wisdom, united to good fortune. It had reduced, under its sway, Dalmatia and Rhodes, Scio and Samos, Mytelene and Andros, Crete and Cyprus, and all the islands of the Egean and Ionian Seas, together with the Peloponnesus and the Hellespont.

Then, going beyond the limits of our peninsula, I narrated how, amidst the Alps of Helvetia, there had been again renewed the example of the Grecian republics, allied together for the last two centuries; and also how, in former times, the shores of the Batavians had also become the retreat of maritime liberty; and also how, upon the plains of Sarmatia, there had existed a vast re-

public of nobles, weak on account of their discords; and who had proved so obstinately resolved against adopting any remedies, that they had rather preferred to suffer a civil death.

Lastly, I narrated how, in the island of Britain, which in their days was almost unknown, and in a state of barbarism, two centuries had not yet elapsed since they had not only expelled their king with seditious tumults, but had even brought him to public trial, condemned him to death, and brought down his royal head upon the block, amidst the assemblage of his vassals; and that thereafter his lineage had been expelled, and being oppressed by fortune, had even sought refuge within the walls of this very city; which, dissimilar in its present habits to the usages of antiquity, in so many various ways, had yet received that exiled, and other unfortunate monarchs, with as much kindness as formerly the ancient city had proudly expelled its own kings.

I was then interrogated by a circle of phantoms, respecting the origin and state of these republics, as if solicitous to know the precise nature and extent of the liberty of nations; and such of them as had lived during the free ages of Rome,

gave manifest signs of being greatly pleased. And I distinctly, as far as my memory, and the great extent of the subject admitted, narrated to them the events which they were desirous of knowing, from the beginning of my own times, in due order.

But when I had ceased, Pompey again presented himself, and, with dignified aspect, said:—

"Assuredly, since our immense republic was overthrown by time, but still more by its own vices, others must have arisen as from ours, like scions from the parent tree. These deriving their birth, not so much from disgust at oppressions, or from being wearied out with long misfortunes, as because they had been abandoned by their feeble tyrants, must have commenced ingloriously, without splendour, and finished ignominiously, from the effect of their own vices. For having been exalted through the cowardice of those who governed them, they were extinguished through the prevalence of their own base cowardice, and crafty plots. Now, of these poor copies of so illustrious an example, the condition must have been always wretched, and all their customs and exploits of arms must have been abject, in com-

parison with ours. For, exactly in proportion as loyalty and good faith were honoured amongst us, so amongst you were treachery and disguise observed; which, as we perceive from daily examples, becomes not only divested of the deformity of vice, but clothed in the appearance of virtue, and even obtains the applauses due to it. And therefore that has happened which was never yet tolerated before by any people, namely, that a theory of fraud should have been, in grave style, set forth in a celebrated volume, and reduced into a science. But I perceive there was one amongst you, who, imitating Brutus, put to death a certain Alexander, the tyrant of Etruria. But even that action was obscured by the prevailing vice of his times—fraud; because he had induced him to take shelter under his own roof, attracting him, by the vilest offices of servility, and while he lay immersed in sleep, that perfidious host inundated with blood the bed of his own guest. I see also, in this my own country, in an age of darkness, a Tribune arise, an awkward imitator of pristine virtue, and aspiring to make it revive here, although quite forgotten through long depravity. But these efforts seemed only like vain presump-

tions, as, by their character and circumstances, they demonstrate your incapacity to accomplish such illustrious purposes. One exploit nevertheless, shines forth with splendour, amidst the darkness of ages, like a constellation in the night, a magnanimous action, and which has quite a Roman character. I would extol, with these words, the noble pride of the Tuscan ambassador to the Gallic King, who perished in Italy three centuries ago. Certainly he was a rival of the virtue of Camillus; and, like him, saved his native country from the same people."

He spoke thus, because I had narrated to him how Charles the Eighth, having, more by our cowardice than by the exercise of his own courage, penetrated into Italy, had in a short time occupied it, and how, having entered into the free city of Florence, he had wished to bring it under submission with no other reasoning than mere force of arms. He, therefore, rendered overbearing by his prosperous fortune, intimated, by a decree read in his presence, to the magistrates, that they should surrender the city at discretion, as if they were vanquished. Amongst these, Pietro Capponi, moved by a noble impulse of in-

dignation, tore from the hands of the reader the disgraceful paper, and tearing it to pieces before the king's face, gave utterance from his intrepid breast to the following memorable words:—"Since terms so dishonourable are proposed, do thou sound thy trumpets, and we will sound our bells;" —which generous bravery struck the king with so much wonder, that, although intoxicated with power and success, he evacuated Florence, and entered into an alliance with it on moderate conditions.

"I pass over," proceeded Pompey, "that city in the middle of Etruria, which has existed in freedom for upwards of five centuries, surrounded by absolute governments, because it hath remained uninjured more from the smallness of its size, than from any better reason. I would also pass over that small retreat of liberty on the shore of Liguria, were it not rendered illustrious by its immortal citizen who refused the government of his native country, which had been offered to him by a foreign tyrant, preferring the sincere affection of freemen, to the false honours of an odious authority. For which exalted loyalty, however, he received but a wretched return, for,

a conspiracy having been formed against him by his own kinsman, he with difficulty escaped from the snare, instead of spending his latter years in security, as he deserved, in the midst of his grateful countrymen: whence, it is apparent, that high-minded actions were not adapted to the corruption of the times in which he lived. And then, as if that region had become altogether destitute of every good seed, not a single virtue struck root in it, and nothing seemed to flourish there but the rank weeds of fraud and iniquity.

"The imagination, however, delights in hovering over that republic, which, as thou hast narrated, emerged, thirteen centuries ago, in so wonderful a manner, from the waves of the Adriatic; not only because no other free state has had so long a duration, but because it did well deserve it. I contemplate its first commencement, which was still more glorious than that of ours; the one founded by a union of proscribed outlaws, who had fled from the vengeance of the laws; while the other had its origin in honourable men, who sought a refuge on the bosom of the ocean, from outrage, tyranny, and

desolation. And its succeeding progress and greatness have well accorded with so praiseworthy a commencement. For while not only Italy, but the whole of Europe, were subject to the revolutions of empires, and the mutations of fortune, that city, (as if seated in the midst of a stormy sea, without being subject to its rage,) feared and respected, remained safe amidst the most formidable convulsions which raged around it. In that city alone, is preserved the pure and uncontaminated blood of the ancient race of Italy, while all the other regions have fallen in succession a prey to foreign nations. And although its local situation, in the midst of the waves, may be favourable for its preservation, yet no city was ever yet impregnable, or perpetual from its natural locality, or from the artificial strength of its ramparts; for only the wisdom of its laws, the prudence of its counsels, the valour of its arms, could so long have resisted the outrages of fortune. All hail, then, O marvellous city! and long may the heavens shine propitiously on thy majestic aspect, while, like a queen, thou proudly overlookest the raging sea. Let us hope that thy age of vigour has not yet pass-

ed away, and that thou art not now verging towards the feebleness of thy dotage!"

He uttered these words with a sigh; and his countenance appeared somewhat obscured by sorrow. It seemed as if he descried in futurity some wonderful event. But, as if he could not declare it, he continued:—

"Behold Sarmatia, which thou still callest a republic. As Britain has happily united the vigorous promptitude of royal authority with the solemn justice of general deliberation, this unfortunate nation has only selected the evils of both. For there terror and force of arms confer the crown, which is therefore a perpetual source of warfare, and the fatal object of ambition; there all are competitors for that pernicious right, which was our ruin, although restricted solely to the Tribunes of the people. Therefore it is no wonder that, in their general assemblies, the sounds of eloquence and of arms are heard at the same time, and that terror should be the attendant upon consent, and threats and bloodshed the constant result of all their civil assemblies. Certainly it is an incredible event, that such a government should ever exist there.

"Then, again, I behold," said he, "the numerous cities which emerged from the Batavian shore. There men betook themselves, amidst the uninhabitable waves; and having become in a manner amphibious, in order to live in freedom, have repelled the inundations of the ocean by means of ramparts, an operation never before attempted by human industry. Doubly menaced, they are surrounded on one side by the raging ocean, constantly striving to immerse their habitations, while, on the other, they are perpetually held in check, by the indignation of sceptered princes. Never before was there any nation which endured greater privations for the sake of freedom, nor which acquired it after greater struggles. But that state is now labouring under that most fatal of all pestilences—civil discord; through which, after having been wounded by its own hands, it is now lacerating in a wretched manner its own entrails.

"Behold, in the Northern Ocean, how haughty Britain towers aloft, and vaunts itself of having dragged to the scaffold its own tyrant as an example new in history; and see how proudly these islanders deport themselves ever since. That

formidable queen of the seas sits majestically enthroned, hating tyrants, and jealous of her own king, who is, in fact, more the phantom, than the real substantial essence of royal authority. She, rendered haughty by prosperity, holds the universe in contempt, considering herself alone free, and looking down upon all other nations as subjected to ignominious slavery. Thence, she insults them with barbarous contumely, whenever they approach her inhospitable shores. But although she is herself jealous of her own liberty, yet, to her remote colonies, she is a severe tyrant, and has already tired out the obedience of those of the Western Ocean, while those of the East, witnesses of their example and long-suffering, under the atrocious oppression caused by her overweening avarice, will assuredly soon attempt to imitate it. And whenever, O proud island! that time shall arrive, when, by thy corruptions, thou shalt have lost these immense colonies, naturally separated from thee by such immense oceans, then, at length, thou mayst fear the approach of thy own overthrow!

"One republic, nevertheless, preserves in thy own neighbourhood its primitive customs. Oh,

ye Alpine rocks of Helvetia!—ye retreat of moderate life and simple habits. But still I discover there an unworthy custom; for these people, themselves free, and redeemed by the blood of their ancestors, make a market of their own, and, having become the ministers of oppression, sell their heart's-blood to tyrants. Not for their country, not in the cause of justice, nor for themselves, but for vile hire they give and receive death-blows, fighting in opposite armies, brother often opposed to brother, and fathers to their own sons. Wherefore, of all those republics, whose exploits thou hast just now so pompously displayed, some from their humility, others from their vicious constitution, others from their misfortunes, either ought not to be compared with ours, or, if placed in comparison, must remain our inferiors."

CONFERENCE FOURTH.

At the Baths of Dioclesian and of Titus; where a candid judgment is passed upon the Merits of Coriolanus.

Pompey was silent, and then looked around him in a haughty guise, showing that he still felt his power over the Roman multitude. As to myself, although I had treasured up in my mind several arguments to oppose to his reasonings, which to me appeared to be more dogmatical than certain, and enounced not without a certain tincture of Patrician violence, yet the aspect of so great a man restrained in me the licence which had been conceded, of opposing his opinions. Therefore, in respectful silence, I turned myself around, on my return towards the city. Close behind fluttered the crowding phantoms, and eve-

ry one passed his own judgment on the late disputations. Neither shadow, nor dust, nor noise, nor trampling of footsteps was produced by so great a multitude; but only a chattering, as if of an innumerable concourse of birds in a grove, when the disk of the sun is just emerging from the ocean. They crossed the Anio, obscuring it over like a fleeting cloud, and, re-entering by the Numantine gate, turned to the left on the spacious plain of the Quirinal. There they contemplated for a time in silence the extensive ruins of the Baths of Dioclesian, and then a spirit thus mournfully commenced:—

"O wretched appearance of so wonderful an edifice! once a receptacle for all our useful and delightful recreations. Here were once splendid porticoes of precious marble, accommodated both for conversation and sport. The spacious halls were ever an open asylum for all festive spectacles. Every pleasure of life appeared here united for universal delight; since upwards of three thousand baths, and extensive basins for swimming, and renowned wrestling-places for athletic exercises, and extensive libraries, the retreat of silence, and statues of heroes, and of celebrated

worthies, adorned this delicious retreat of the citizens of Rome. At present, what is left remaining of so great a mass of building, the stupendous result of infinite riches, excepting the wretched carcase. Nay, more; is it possible, that, in this unhappy land, there are no longer any rustic habitations, that it has become necessary to collect the straw and litter in these ample vaults, the precious monuments of noble architecture. Why, then, do you, in order to show your hatred of our ancient magnificence, insult every remaining vestige of it, by thus profaning them to the vilest offices. Behold, now, reduced into a drunken tavern, that hall, preserved from the outrages of so many centuries, in order that it might at last be converted to so revolting a purpose. Oh, the sport of a barbarous nation!"

While he thus exclaimed, there was heard the sound of meek voices, slowly chaunting the midnight hymns of peace. The ghost then restrained his complaints, and, turning himself round to me, inquired:—"What may that be?"

And I answered him:—"That these ruins were not altogether so unworthily transformed as he believed; for that, in some of them converted

to majestic temples, there at present resounded those pious hymns, whilst others were adopted as a peaceful retreat for silence, sobriety, and contemplation."

The spectres listened with silent awe to these plaintive songs, and appeared to be overcome with an agreeable delight. The face of the heavens was now studded with stars, and the moon had gone down in the Western Ocean. The darkness and serenity of the atmosphere seemed to favour our secret communings, as we approached near the Esquiline Hill, and slowly ascended its gentle slope. I, proceeding in front, had withdrawn the multitude from the ruins on the Quirinal, because I had been unable to find a sufficient exculpation in answer to their reproaches. But vain was my caution, since other disagreeable objects soon presented a fresh occasion for their inconsolable complaints. They looked anxiously all around, and pointed out the spots on which had once arisen the temples, baths, and splendid places upon that hill, particularly upon that part of it denominated the Carine. I also beheld and recognized two ghosts, who, accompanied by a train of obsequious followers, appeared to search

anxiously for the vestiges of a certain monument. These were the two illustrious rivals, the Dictator and Pompey, who were going in quest of their own habitations, which were situated on the Esquiline.

In the mean time, we had reached the summit, upon which appeared now the spacious ruins of the baths of Titus and Pompey. The ruined mass was covered with rank aquatic plants springing up amidst the waters, which escaped from the fissures of the ruined conduits, and which swelled out into a dreary marsh. At which sight the spectres murmured, as if again disposed to utter complaints; therefore, in order to prevent them, I commenced :—

" Oh ! ye magnanimous ancestors, listen to me, your descendant, who, although with reverence, yet with such a spirit, now address you, as is befitting your greatness and my own honest loyalty. Behold ! here, what is left remaining of that extensive and celebrated building, such as it is, after not less than seventeen centuries, and terrible revolutions, devastations of the barbarians, earthquakes, and inundations, and an infinitude of adverse circumstances arising from the lapse of

time and inevitable fortune. This land has been so often turned up by the mattock, that not a clod has been left untouched. We have extracted from its abysses those wonderful pieces of sculpture with which that edifice was adorned; and we preserve them as glorious trophies of the triumph of the arts of Greece over the havoc of time. Here are still remaining the pictures of your times, preserved by us with extreme care, and which have been diffused over the whole globe by means of the numerous copies which we have made of them both by the pencil and graver."

At which words, the ghosts descended to look at them, and gladly beheld such as had been left uninjured, after the destruction of so many wonderful works in the deluge of oblivion. When, suddenly, the crowd collected around one picture, and, after they had considered it for some time in silence, Pomponius Atticus exclaimed:—

"Numerous, certainly, are the illustrious deeds of the Roman citizens which deserve to be perpetuated, as great examples, by the aid of painting. But one which I here behold, although uninjured, is better deserving of being forgotten for ever

than handed down to fame. Behold, O Quirites! Vetturia, who is restraining Coriolanus as he is bent upon the destruction of his native country. He, by a cruel frenzy of pride, being enraged against her, quitted her sacred walls, and directed against them the hostile power of the Volscians. Having become their vile leader, he despised, ignominiously, all the supplications of the senators, and refused to lay down his sword in their presence. Thereafter, like a child, moved by the entreaties of its mother,—weak rather than repentant,—he finished, in treachery, an undertaking commenced in madness. For, having betrayed the alliance into which he had entered with the Volscians, he proved himself wavering alike in good as in evil, and unfaithful to both parties. Great minds either do not resolve upon extreme wickedness, or do fully accomplish it; or if they do leave it incomplete, they are only prevented by some extraordinary and terrible occasion. But what prevented the fatal effects of thy rage except a few female tears? Thou wert overcome by those affections which souls, truly Roman, previously to thee, had despised, when placed in competition with their incomparable

love of country. Thus Horatius the Conqueror was offended instead of being mollified with the tears of his sister; and if he wept, it was but from indignation that she should love an enemy of Rome, and in an atrocious paroxysm of virtue put her to death. And Junius Brutus, that severe Consul, deprived himself, by a dreadful sentence, of his two sons, because they were partial to tyrants; Manlius condemned to death his own son because he had fought contrary to orders; and, after his time, another Brutus, named Marcus, pierced with his celebrated steel the heart of a friend—possibly his father. Behold, to what a degree the Romans loved their country in preference to sisters, sons, or fathers—in so much, that the examples of this magnanimity, like extraordinary prodigies, are alike formidable and marvellous. But in thee, thy soft affection towards thy mother prevailed over thy hatred towards thy country, so that no generous impulse of virtue, but only thy own weakness prevented the misdeed. Therefore, alike disgraceful in thee was the effort of thy wicked purpose, as the baseness of leaving it unexecuted was disloyal."

The majority of the spectres concurred in these

opinions, pronouncing them sincere, because unembellished with the ornaments of style, which, by mingling the flowers of eloquence with the better fruits of evil deeds, is but too apt to make us approve of that in history which we ought rather to abominate.

But the dampness of the place, and the close atmosphere, compressed in its subterraneous chambers, affected my breast with a painful sense of suffocation, and the imposing eloquence of Pomponius, at the same time, overwhelmed me with unusual amazement. Then I began to suffer the weakness of humanity; and being constrained to respire the open air, I sallied forth from the melancholy excavation, and seated myself upon the dewy turf. There I contemplated in silence these spacious ruins. Soon the ghosts followed my steps, and patiently awaited till I had become sufficiently restored to proceed in conducting them on their pilgrimage. After a short pause, I descended from the Esquiline, proceeding slowly towards the Cœlian hill. The multitude would not have recognized it, had it not been for the Amphitheatre of Flavius, which lies upon its side, and from the circumjacent hills

which point out its situation, for it had sunk so completely into the valley as to be no longer distinguishable. Therefore, it is clear, that the numerous monuments which once adorned its sides having fallen down, and their ruins being carried, partly by their gravity, and partly by the force of water, into the surrounding vallies, had completely filled them up. Of which revolution we have ample proofs from the deep excavations which our erudite researches after antiquities have laid open, because in these we have discovered the ancient habitations covered over with incumbent ruins.

The shades wandered in fruitless search after the lofty temples, the wonderful aqueducts, and splendid monuments, which formerly arose the majestic ornaments of this quarter. But of these, with all the sagacity inherent in their intellectual nature, they were only able to discover some scattered remains converted into the miserable cottages of husbandmen. They only still perceived, with joy, upon the hill that same obelisk which, in their times, stood in the Circus Maximus—rejoicing that, being dug out from its ruins, it had been once more restored to the open air, in perpetual testimonial of their own former

magnificence. And although they observed that it had been fractured into several parts, and even some lost portions restored,—manifest indications of its fall,—yet they all seemed to contemplate it with amazement, just as some ancient warriors are beheld, that display by their scars the various perils they have sustained. They next observed, at some distance beyond the Porta Capena, a little to the left of the Via Latina, that temple which, according to fame, had been erected to Female Fortune, on account of the meeting which, it is said, took place on that spot, between the indignant Coriolanus and his supplicating parent; which monument, (if the tradition be really true, as handed down to us by time,) must have been always preserved from the injuries of ages, being formed of brick, of a square shape, simple and imposing even from its diminutive size. I, therefore, did not omit to interrogate Pomponius, as being especially conversant with all the erudition of his times, if this were indeed the temple which was reported. But he, instead of satisfying my curiosity with his usual urbanity, answered me scornfully:—

"Thou art well aware how disagreeable to me

is all remembrance of so bad a citizen; and, therefore, thou must feel that nothing ought to preserve his name." After which words, indignantly he turned away.

I, however, insisted, moved by the wish of letting my contemporaries know the truth or falsehood of these traditions, and put the same questions to the surrounding spectres; but they, in silence, imitated the example of Pomponius, and showed, by their behaviour, that they perfectly coincided in his opinion.

CONFERENCE FIFTH.

The Tombs on the Appian Way.

MEANWHILE, we had arrived at the Porta Capena, through which proceeds the celebrated Via Appia. The ghosts first surveyed the gate and the two adjoining towers, both being composed, as is manifest, from the fragments of ancient tombs; when, on a sudden, I heard the sound of half suppressed sighs and lamentations; and, therefore, I anxiously inquired of Tullius:—"Wherefore is this lamentation?"

And he answered:—"They are grieved at perceiving their monuments destroyed."

I then, to display my acquaintance with ancient customs, immediately added:—

"I am well aware, that, upon both sides of this consular highway, there were innumerable sepul-

chres, and thyself hast mentioned them in thy Tusculan Dialogues."

Tullius was pleased with such a reminiscence, as a token of his exalted and immortal fame. The crowd had now entered upon the highway, and in sad silence contemplated the ruined remains dispersed over the deserted Campagna. I beheld some spectres approaching towards a tomb covered over with ivy, and then lifting up their hands to Heaven, and striking their breasts, and covering their faces with their robes, and stamping violently upon the ground in token of their indignation. Then I, moved alike with pity and curiosity, approached them, and beheld, freshly scattered around the sepulchre, some bones and skulls, which glittered in the dubious rays of the stars; wherefore, I conjectured that these poor wretches were grieved at perceiving their ashes thus scattered to become the sport of the elements. I then observed, with amazement, that they were endeavouring to collect together the broken bones with their hands and again deposit them in the tomb. But all fruitless were their attempts, for with incorporeal frames they were unable to move the material

substance. Then one phantom turned round to me with a weeping countenance, and beseechingly said:—

"Alas! since thou are still clothed in matter, and thereby enabled to communicate motion, do thou gather together these our remains, and, for pity's sake, commit them again to the tomb."

I made no answer, for my tears prevented me from speaking, but, immediately complying with their request, gathered up the scattered ashes and again committed them to the bosom of the neglected tomb.

While I thus fulfilled this laudable office, the spectres were mute with gratitude. But, after the task was completed, they gratefully extolled me as the most benevolent of mortals.

Then I thus addressed Tullius:—"Tell me, O my instructor, why are these people so solicitous about their mortal remains, whilst ye more illustrious shades display not the smallest anxiety?"

And Tullius kindly answered:—"Those who are so grieved on this occasion, are the souls of the vulgar, who still retain, even here, their low sentiments. They still lament the loss of their

bodily existence, but no one of us instructed souls, who, while living, despised death, are here grieved by its consequences. As amongst you, the serpent glides along more gladly in the beams of the sun, after having changed his variegated skin for one fresh and more beautiful, so we having deposited upon earth our wretched incumbrance, and having been born again to a life exempt from the tyranny of time, are called to the enjoyment of the disembodied contemplation of eternal splendour; and, neither concerning the dreams of this valley, nor the frail remains of our bodies, do we longer feel any interest."

Then Tullius, in accordance with those doctrines of contempt of death, which resound so exaltedly throughout his volumes, and which he reduced to practice in his own lamented end, turned upon his heel and quitted the sorrowing crowd. But Pomponius, according to his kind disposition, accommodating himself to the general opinions, spoke in this manner:—

"Ye behold here, O Quirites! a lamentable proof of the vanity of human life. Of no avail in handing down an honoured name to late posterity are either illustrious perils, or

magnanimous actions, or exalted virtue. A generation filled with contempt for its predecessors, hath not been contented with outraging our temples, theatres, and baths, which were at least pleasing monuments to behold, but even our very ashes and dried bones, which with pious tears we had consigned to these urns, have they removed from thence and scattered them to the birds of the air; and yet no office is more sacred than that with which the survivors attempt to conquer, as much as in them lies, time and death, by preserving with funeral rites and honours the spoils of the dead. Therefore, in all ages, even the most barbarous nations, in pursuance of so natural a piety, either by means of fire or precious balsams, have attempted to preserve their dead from the attacks of destruction, and to perpetuate their memory by some memorial exposed to public view. And, therefore, every one who, in this life, hath any feeling of human nature, is wont to contemplate with pious sorrow any tomb as being the abyss into which, sooner or later, every one must inevitably descend. In considering, too, with what care they are adorned, and with what honours they are consecrated

and revered, the living seem to alleviate in some measure the melancholy presentiment of death, by the gratifying conviction, that, even when deceased, they will not be treated with contempt."

I felt considerable emotion at hearing these humane opinions, and he, discovering by my countenance my inward thoughts, turning towards me, proceeded :—

" In this thy body is invested thy immortal and intellectual substance, which shortly, when thy frail clay shall be destroyed, will escape like an element set free for ever in all its purity. But even during life, it feels, in various ways, by anticipation a certain impulse, which urges it onwards towards eternity. Your minds are constantly agitated by various wishes to perpetuate the memory of yourselves ; to accomplish which, some by means of arms, others by their genius, or by works of utility, others, finally, by unheard of crimes, disturb the world, in order that their fame, like that of a stormy wave, may reach even unto more remote shores. We, however, are deceived, who have placed for this purpose so vainly our ashes in splendid tombs, and by the side of this celebrated high-

way! Already the slow ox drags the ploughshare over our bones, and the stupid cow-herd treads them under foot. Alas! how devastation triumphs over these fields! I behold the spot upon which the glorious Horatii combated: the illustrious blood which dyed the clods of these furrows during that incredible battle, ought at least to have escaped from profanation on account of that wonderful recollection, and the five tombs ought still to remain out of reverence for the action, and for the names of the combatants! Here, also, there once stood the tomb of a young girl, who, by her ill-timed tears, obscured the triumph, and was slain by her exulting brother. Now, not even a single stone remains upon which the pensive pilgrim might sit, while recalling to mind, in the midst of this solitude, the melancholy transaction."

Thus Pomponius deplored. Meanwhile, the ghosts contemplated, disconsolate, the dreary Campagna. They then turned round to me, as if asking the reason of so many dilapidations; wherefore I spoke in this manner:—

"We, who live at present amongst these ruins, behold them with pity, as a spectacle

of cruel devastation; and, indeed, we even protect them with the greatest veneration, but, assuredly, we are unable, in opposition to all the laws of nature, to reproduce what has been destroyed. But if the injuries of time have deprived us of so many of your wonderful edifices, it has, however, left an ardent desire to study every remain, and to discover what has been spared. Therefore we make extensive excavations into the earth, in order to recover whatever has been overwhelmed there of your pristine magnificence, and, on finding them, we are wont to contemplate them with joy, mingled with grief, in pleasing remembrance of you their founders. And this, our care, has been in some measure crowned with success by the discovery of temples, and baths, and urns, and palaces; and, finally, of entire cities, as has lately happened in my own times, with regard to two of Magna Græcia. But if it were known to you, O ye magnanimous spirits, with what great expence we undertake these works, with how much study we illustrate their ancient monuments, with what care we preserve them, assuredly, in place of censuring, ye would praise us with corresponding

gratitude. Because we open your urns with much anxiety, and finding therein either necklaces, or rings, or female ornaments, or amongst your ashes those small bottles in which, according to fame, the pious tears were dropped, which were shed during the funeral rites, or lamps, or remains of the incombustible cloths of asbestus, in which your bodies were burned, all these we preserve with jealous care; and coins, or arms, or furniture, or specimens of your customs and manners, are to us precious materials for learned conjecture. You did not do so much for the illustrious nations who preceded you, being more desirous to subdue them, than to investigate their ancient origin. Ye, on the contrary, caring only about your glory, rendered yourselves illustrious by successful oppression, and obscured for ever the glory of the remainder of Italy, over the nations of which you yourselves extended the dark veil of oblivion. And that which did not happen after your country is subdued by barbarians, yet happened through you, because they became partakers of our polished manners; but you, on the contrary, spreading destruction

with your triumphs, not only conquered, but desolated and degraded that Italy, which was found by you flourishing and populous, inhabited by illustrious and enlightened nations. These were derived from mighty warriors, who had taken refuge from the celebrated sack of Troy, or from whatever fatal transaction that may have been, which is shadowed forth in that tradition. Their descendants, therefore, suffered much greater calamities at your hands, than those from which their own progenitors had escaped. Nevertheless, if that ancient rumour is really true, which has been consigned to immortality by the lyre of Virgil, that you are the descendants of Æneas, it is possible that that hero may be agreeably appeased, by narrating to him how his race left to the world a terrible vengeance of the misfortunes which he endured. It desolated, vanquished, and destroyed all the kingdoms of the most celebrated leaders who had concurred in the destruction of Troy. And so great is the obscurity into which they are for ever fallen, that there no longer shines amongst them even a glimpse of glory, but oppressed they lie at the feet of the barbarous despisers of all

learning. Neither, indeed, was your city ever so deprived of all its lustre, as the splendid Athens was by you; which being subdued by that blood-hound Patrician Scylla, and afterwards profaned by the dissolute debaucheries of the Triumvir Mark Antony, was left like a tree which had been struck by lightning. But let him, who amongst you feels aggrieved by the ruin of these monuments, now tell me, what tomb of the distinguished princes of Etruria, what of Æneas, or Julius, or of Evander, was still left in existence in your times. And thou, O Marcus Tullius, art well aware, how, during thy Sicilian questorship, the tomb of Archimedes, only one hundred and forty years after his death, was no longer known in Syracuse, his native country, which he had so gloriously defended by means of machines of his invention, and which deed is still proclaimed by fame over the whole world. Thou wert the person, who made known to the Syracusans, unwilling to credit it, the tomb of so great a citizen covered over with brambles and thorns. Nay, more, even in Rome itself, after five centuries, the tomb of Numa had either perished, or was no longer known; while here,

at the present time, on the contrary, after so many revolutions of the universe, you may perceive, still standing, great part of the majestic tomb of Cecilia Metella; and here, at the gate leading to Ostia, you behold, untouched, the sepulchral pyramid of Cestius; and within the city, the proud mole of Adrian upon the bank of the river, and in its front, a precious relic of the mausoleum of Augustus; and yet there are here accumulated all the wreck of ages. Nothing can withstand the power of time, excepting the force of virtue."

Tullius replied not, but, with a courteous motion, showed that he did not dissent from my opinion. Pomponius fixed his eyes upon me, and displayed, by a gentle smile, that he felt pleased with the freedom of my remarks.

CONFERENCE SIXTH.

At the Grotto of the Nymph Egeria—Digression upon the Eternity of Intellectual Substance—The Punishment of Tullia.

The multitude remained silent like the ocean during a calm, and, therefore, conjecturing that they were appeased by my reasonings, and that they wished to be conducted elsewhere, I declined to the left of the Appian way. We soon arrived at that plain, where still the pilgrims of all nations admire the ruins of the Grotto of the nymph Egeria. The tradition is, that there the religious king held sacred communings with her. The air was clear, so that that delicious vale, enclosed all around by gently sloping hills, was displayed to view.

In the middle of it calmly flowed the sacred rivulet called the stream of Egeria, to the murmuring of which the night-breeze sighed in accordance, as it gently waved the leafy branches. At times we heard the lowing of the oxen at pasture on its grassy margin, and the watchful shepherds' dogs bayed at the sound of each falling leaf. The birds, meanwhile, sung from the morass, while the field-cricket chirped from the dry fissures of the field; the bats wheeled through the murky sky, and the larger birds of night, at intervals, shrieked as they flitted across the silent dale. Opposite to it, and on the other side of the Appian way, stand the vast ruins of the Circus of Caracalla. Upon its deserted arena still reigned primeval silence, and only from the ruins of the squalid edifices issued forth the monotonous shrieks of the owls. Now that Appian Way, once filled with the busy hum of crowds, was silent; and mute was that Circus, in which resounded the mingled acclamations of innumerable spectators, the neighings of steeds, the creaking of wheels, the cracking of whips, and the threatenings of the charioteers. Sacred and perpetual is the silence of the valley of Egeria. These solitudes bore witness to the mysterious

rites of the peaceful king. We approached with feelings of deep reverence the cave of that celebrated nymph. The thick dark ivy hung over its entrance, and the sacred fountain murmured in the interior of the grotto; on the hill overhanging it still appear the ruins of the Temple of the Muses.

"All hail!" exclaimed Tullius, O venerable cave, so well suited by thy soothing silence to celestial meditations! Neither the nymph Egeria, nor the Muses, nor any other imaginary deities, but the delicious sound of this fountain, and the stilling breeze, and the pensive solitude, so miraculously favoured thy wary studies. Neither let any one complain of these prudent deceptions, but only of the stupid ferocity of the vulgar, which constrained that wise king to have recourse to them."

Tullius ceased, and, at that moment, an inconceivable stillness restrained all their voices to such a degree that the gentle murmur of the placid fountain was alone heard amidst so great a multitude. Never, while in the presence of any other objects, had the shades remained so mute from reverence, as in that mysterious temple, and, in the

presence of the tremendous divinity, no eloquence could have so well expressed their general respect as a long and universal cessation of all discourse.

And after I had remained there for some time, and not a voice struck the air, I again turned round towards the city. We re-entered it by the same Porta Capena, and then, upon our left, there soon appeared the extensive walls of the Baths of the wicked Caracalla, near the sides of the Aventine, the only remaining relic of the splendid ornaments with which that hill was once covered. Now commenced the buzzing of the crowd, who especially recollected the magnificence of that edifice, where above one thousand six hundred marble seats were accommodated for public bathing; where the images of the divinities and of heroes, sculptured by the most expert chisels of Greece, were admired, and worthy of resisting the attacks of time. Now they grieved at beholding not a single memorial, as if they had all crumbled into dust; and they contemplated the tottering remains of the Baths, thrown down, squalid, and neglected, another miserable instance of the instability of all human grandeur. In order to tranquillize

these commotions, I addressed them as follows:—

"Even upon the solid rocky pavements of your consular highways, the wheels of carriages, by their frequent and long-continued friction, have impressed deep furrows, and the images of your deities have been at times wasted away by the lips of devotees; nay, more, the very droppings of water have, after a length of time, produced wonderful and extensive openings in the bosom of marble rocks; is it therefore to be wondered at, that these material objects should have suffered a portion of that destruction which is common throughout nature? But as far as we have been enabled, we defend them from more extensive destruction. From this ground, in which were buried, during the devastations of the barbarians, the divine works of the Greek sculptors have been extracted by us, and placed in splendid halls to afford wonder and delight to all nations. Those ingenious persons, who are skilled in sculpture, contemplate them with feelings of the greatest emotion, and the chisel trembles in their hand whenever they attempt to imitate them; a paleness has overspread the countenances of many

when they have beheld these divine works for the first time. Therefore they never were so much admired and taken care of by you, not even in your temples, when they were there the objects of divine worship. But even these same ruins, the objects of your complaints, are also protected by us with so much solicitude, that our laws have prescribed the severest punishment against all those who shall attempt, with audacious hands, to throw down a single stone of any of your monuments."

While I thus spoke, Tullius stood before me, so that, being excited by his presence, I exclaimed:—

"Still let the voracity of time be satiated by consuming the works of stone and of clay, such alone it is possible for the powerful to erect! and even now I behold many just as sublime which have been raised by your successors. But time has not the power to extinguish the delightful productions of the mind, which neither riches nor pomp can create or destroy, as they can do the others at their pleasure. Therefore, these ravages inflicted by time upon walls and marbles are considered but of small consequence by us, since it has respected a great portion of thy golden volumes."

At which words he, still more rejoiced, kindly looked upon me with glistening eyes, so that I proceeded with still more animation :—

"O incomparable consul, and divine and immortal writer! If such powerful and convincing proofs should not produce conviction in our minds, that our thinking powers are eternal and incorporeal, certainly an attentive perusal of thy works alone would produce in every rational mind that agreeable persuasion. Because, from base matter, which, when scarcely arrived at its full maturity of manhood, immediately declines and decays, it is not probable that the sublime powers of intellect should ever emanate. These excite in us a species of delight quite different from bodily and material objects—internal, pure, and celestial. So great is this delight, that we are unable to express it by words, to understand by any efforts of meditation, or to give any satisfactory definition of it. He, however, who first asserted that this internal impulse, which excites us to glory and truth, which produces every exalted enterprize, all illustrious acts of beneficence, all mild virtues, and all the triumphs of eloquence and of poetry,—that that is nothing else but an effect

of this frail structure, and that it must perish along with it;—that person depraved human sciences, and, with a cruel fraud, hath attempted to persuade others of that which he himself could not possibly believe; because he ascribed to a cause an effect repugnant to it in all its qualities and accidents. Neither was he only an enemy of truth, but degraded, as far as was in his power, his own species, by defrauding it of its most precious reward; without which, we should be no better than unhappy machines, produced to languish for a time upon this confined planet, and endowed with the fatal knowledge of our own weakness. Wherefore, with our faces bowed down upon that earth which reclaims us, we should not dare to aspire towards that heaven which to us hath been for ever denied.

"Alas! what a cruel sentence of destruction is that which freezes the heart, and deprives it of every impulse towards all useful or generous undertakings! Without the delicious prospect of the immortality of this intellectual mind, which sets this body in motion, what else is life but a melancholy expectation of annihilation? Reason, piety, every useful and humane affection, de-

mand that such a doctrine should actuate our minds, and comfort us by its noble hopes, so that we may live happily for ourselves and usefully for others."

"Fear not, then," said Tullius with benevolence, "that such a doctrine should ever become less prevalent amongst men, because it is inherent in their minds, and necessary to their hearts. This our intellect is a celestial flame, which hath ever a tendency to ascend towards its own sphere; or, like a fountain flowing continually towards its own ocean, its every impulse is turned towards the centre of its origin, and no subtlety of wicked men ever has, or ever will be able to extinguish this, I will not call it doctrine, but internal voice, or consciousness, which ever, and amongst all nations, deeply resounds. This is that truth which is transmitted from generation to generation, and against the evidence of which, being neither built upon sophistry nor false eloquence, no spurious arguments will ever prevail. This perpetual instinct is victorious over all those sophistries invented either for the purpose of driving men to extreme desperation, or to make them odious to themselves, by pronouncing them to be a base

compound, neglected by Heaven and devoured by the earth. But, indeed, man stands distinct from all other animals, being exalted above them by the excellence of his intellect, so that no one upon this planet is equal to him, so great is the interval which divides them. For the others feed with their faces bent down, and obedient to their bellies, sleep without care, and are undisturbed about the future, and happy in their stupidity, if indeed such can be called happiness; they have no other wish except to satisfy their sensual appetites, nor ever suffer any mental affliction. Thus, the fat bullock has no dread of the impending axe; nor has the gentle lamb any suspicion of the butcher's knife; nor is the generous steed disturbed by the expectation of the painful drudgeries attendant upon his growing old, and which kill him with fatigue by slow degrees. Man, on the contrary, bears about him the dread of death, the foresight of evils, and is conscious that his nature, of divine origin, is incumbered by his mortal coil, and perfectly comprehends in his mind his own vast misery. Hence arises the necessity which he experiences, that it is not upon this earth, the sad theatre of his calamities, but in the heavens above,

that he must look for any adequate consolation for his misfortunes. Therefore, still more cruel than foolish are those who, from the depravity of their miserable understandings, attempt to deprive others of such a celestial comfort; for without such a prospect, our errors are without a guide, our vices without a restraint, our virtues without a reward."

While he thus spoke, there was heard the clattering noise of a chariot, and the neighing and trampling of steeds. And, lo! there appeared a two-horsed chariot, which passed along the bank of the Tiber. The wheels creaked, and the whole chariot rattled with the clang of iron. Two dim-coloured coursers dragged it along, panting and snorting. There stood upon the seat a doleful phantom, with a royal robe rent upon his shoulders, hair standing on end, a squalid countenance, his eyes cast down, and fixed upon a diadem, which lay at his feet dyed in blood, and which appeared still dropping from his robes. But I beheld a still more dreadful object in the rear of the chariot, a lady who was also covered with a royal mantle, tied by her feet to the axle-trees of the wheels, and dragged along the road. She,

half dead, extended her arms imploring pity, but the charioteer urged on the steeds with speed, and left the furrows in the dust. All the Spectres looked on with indignation and in silence, and no one seemed to bewail this sanguinary outrage. I gazed at it with amazement, until it passed out of sight.

"Thou seest," continued Tullius, standing upon the seat, "Tarquinius, that haughty tyrant; how much has he lowered his proud demeanour, and now appears as he really is, a criminal dragged to punishment. He regards the ill-acquired crown, because it is polluted with domestic blood, and obtained by means of parricide. She who is dragged behind the chariot is Tullia, his atrocious consort, who, in order to make herself queen, slew her first husband, and induced this her second to murder his own father. Then, in horrid triumph, she drove her chariot over his dead body, as it lay in the highway; for which reason that road has ever since borne the title of accursed, which I trust it will never lose. But if they, during their lifetimes, suffered in some degree the punishments attached to such dreadful crimes, here their sufferings are perpetual and without

bounds. Let the wicked tremble even upon their richly jewelled thrones; for, however successful they may be in the accomplishment of their wickedness, none can hope to escape from celestial vengeance. For if that were not great, dreadful, and certain, vain would be all exalted virtues, false the greatest learning, deceitful the voice of internal remorse, the cause of innocence would be desperate, and glorious the triumph of iniquity. Therefore, let no one, in this thy world, exult at the impunity of his illustrious misdeeds, because his besotted folly will be expiated by perpetual punishments."

I, wrapt in admiration of these sage opinions, remained close to him, and humbly listened. Tullius, while he was declaiming, (that I, too, should see him!) gathered up in his left hand the skirts of his *toga*, and leaned his right on my shoulder in a paternal attitude. But I did not perceive the least weight from it. Now the crowing of the cocks resounded through the city, and the stars, yielding to the approach of twilight, began to grow pale. The edges of the clouds towards the east, already tinged with rosy splendour, announced to the world the return of the

re-animating luminary. The grass, the plants, the birds, appeared to desire it. The spectres, on the contrary, avoided the light, so that scarcely did the darkness appear to disperse, when the whole immense multitude, in less time than I am now speaking, vanished. The Campagna remained deserted and mute, and my breast agitated by the tumult of admiration.

NIGHT SIXTH.

NIGHT SIXTH.

CONFERENCE FIRST.

At the Theatre of Marcellus, where the Ghosts discourse respecting the different Habitations of the Heavens, and in the Via Flaminia, where Brutus is indignant at the Inscription placed upon the Obelisk.

It were needless to ask, whether, on the following night, I was solicitous to behold again, and to converse with, these wonderful phantoms. My mind was so completely wrapt up in these interviews, that I no longer seemed to exist in the present age amongst my contemporaries, but in that of the deceased. Then there was such a sense of delight, which impelled to the desired

conferences, that I, during the day, while beholding the things of this life, and hearing the voices of living men, believed I was dreaming; and, on the other hand, that I was only really awake when I returned to enjoy these incredible conversations, in quest of which, scarcely was the veil of night extended in the sky, before I had placed myself on the spot, where, in the morning, the apparitions had disappeared. Silence and slumber held dominion over the earth, whilst I, wide awake, gazed all around, breathless with anxiety, lest the words which I had so lately heard might not also prove the last; when, to my great joy, there issued forth from the ground, like a mist exhaling from the dewy fields, those apparitions, and, in a short time, diffused themselves over the whole space, which lies between the Circus Maximus and the banks of the river. Advancing, they admired, still standing on the margin of the river, the Temple of Vesta, and that of Fortuna Virilis, works of their ancient kings, of which the marble columns still appeared, although mingled with edifices of a later period. Then they observed, in respectful silence near those temples, the wonderful remains of the Cloaca Maxima, a work

of Tarquin, denominated the Proud, on account of his haughty tyranny, but laudably so in regard to the pomp of his buildings, the magnificence of which was never surpassed by succeeding ages. Proceeding next along the way which leads into the heart of the city, we arrived at the imposing ruins of the Theatre of Marcellus. Here the spectres made manifest immediately by their groans, what a loss the empire had sustained from the lamented death of that excellent youth; because, from the virtues which he had already displayed so young, the Romans might have expected the most precious results when he had attained the age of manhood, whereby this, their native country, so long steeped in their blood, might have been made happy at last, through the peaceful sway of a sceptred citizen. And I, to show myself perfectly conversant with the cause of these sighs, advancing into the middle of the sorrowing crowd, addressed them as follows:—

"Ye behold here, from these remains, what a prodigious number of times the light of the sun has shone upon this monument. Resistless fortune hath changed the aspect of the whole world,

yet ye perceive that this majestic theatre is still distinguishable, and even yet bears the name of the young Marcellus, that sweet object of all your hopes. Ye still behold here some remnant of the contiguous portico of his mother Octavia, the sister of Augustus, who possibly never entirely shook from his mind the cloud of sorrow, produced by the death of a nephew whom he so much loved. Nor are these memorials of insensible matter all that is left remaining to us, for time has not been able to destroy that divine poem, in which the untimely end of that distinguished young man is deplored. In the heart of every one, who is not an enemy to the muses, are still impressed those inestimable and pious verses, in which the celestial Virgil hath celebrated that sad event. No wonder that the mother swooned from mortal anguish on hearing them recited by the poet; because his unrivalled style was such, as was not only fit to awaken all the keen sensibility of maternal anguish, but was calculated to produce it in the breasts even of barbarians. Oh incomparable author of these immortal poems! and master of matchless harmony, if this my mortal voice can afford thee any delight, as it now sincerely praises

and invokes thee, show thyself I beseech thee, and grant that I may boast amongst my fellow men of having beheld thee face to face."

Whilst I thus spoke, Tullius interrupted me: —" These prayers, vainly scattered through the heaven, are borne upon the breeze, but will never reach that sublime spirit. For the souls of those who, wrapt in this mortal life, by a divine impulse to the composition of verses, agitate the minds of others with the terrible images conceived in their own, and infuse into their hearts the flames which they themselves experience, and thus call forth tears, by exciting in men's breasts their own victorious feelings,—these, I say, still follow, in the life to come, the same impulses towards these delightful pursuits. But those who have been, in the lower world, excellent in heroic poetry, after death has released them from their bodily frame, are still more attracted by their innate propensity to the celestial harmony of the spheres. To that they listen, in that they are entirely absorbed, and thereby experience ineffable extasy. Not so delighted is the swan, when he plunges himself into the lake in the heats of midsummer, nor so overjoyed is

the dolphin sporting amid the calm and glassy waves. Through the most exalted regions of this heavenly beatitude soars that immortal bard who sung the wrath of Achilles. Near to him follows the Mantuan, not so much his imitator as his rival, and equally secure of perpetual fame. Of this illustrious pair there are many followers;—also exalted poets, who, according to the nature of their poetry, revolve in different spheres of harmony, adapted to their various degrees of inspiration."

"But," said I, not without wonder, "and wherefore art not thou, O illustrious writer! above all others exalted to these delightful spheres?" Tullius answered me:—

"Such an allotment is specially desired by those who passed their lives wholly addicted to the delightful composition of poetry; so that, in these abodes of harmony, they are constantly, as it were, in their own proper element. Then, as to others, who, with the sweetness of verse, united also philosophical speculations, they are not always so much delighted with these sounds, but, at times, are more desirous of that celestial stillness in which the mind can enjoy its own exalted

musings. Therefore thou hast now beheld several times with us our own cheerful Horatius. But the souls of those who were more particularly, during their lifetimes, addicted to the contemplation of truth, are desirous of wandering throughout other wonderful heavens. There shines forth in every part the immense light of infinite science; there are most exalted thoughts incomprehensible to you; there the superior boundaries of the intellect and the spacious fields of truth. The most sublime genius amongst men, and the most wonderful in learning in this life, is, in comparison with those divested of mortality, dull, stupid, and foolish. Your most clear and exalted language is quite unequal to give any idea of, far less to describe, the wonderful delights of spiritual meditation, so that even I, who in this world possessed the glory of eloquence, cannot, by any art of words, express the smallest part of these heavenly secrets, in presence of which all human eloquence is mute. I am well aware what study and diligence is devoted in this transitory life to investigating the bosom of Nature, and to discover whatever may be true in traditions, and to store the memory by the remembrance of a varie-

ty of learning, so as to supply objects of meditation for the mind, and conversation for the tongue. I know, also, how great is the desire amongst us of crossing over that hateful boundary which is opposed to the acquisition of truth, and how great is the joy attendant upon the satisfaction of this intellectual anxiety. Therefore thou mayest, in an inferior degree, understand what rapture is experienced by the mind, when no longer enthralled by the body, in expatiating amidst the clear light of truth, and the infinite desires of science, comprehending them all, however great or various, without ever being tired by a gratification so novel, but ever delightful, and always sought after with so much avidity."

Tullius suspended his discourse, which had now soared to the highest pitch. He remained silent, with his eyes fixed upon the heaven, and his countenance rapt in contemplation. But, after a short pause, during which his mind seemed to be descending from its sublime transport, and accommodating itself to mortal discourse, he asked me how it had come to pass that such a splendid theatre had become changed into an unsightly hovel, in which he could still discern the arches

and marble columns, and the spacious porticoes transformed into workshops and taverns—an indecent appropriation of such great magnificence? I, unable to parry these reproofs, only modestly answered.

"This extensive building which ye see, stands upon the ruins of the theatre, (and these, too, were so extensive that they formed a small hill;) within its bosom remain buried the relics of the edifice, injured by time, and become deep cells, devoted, for several centuries past, to the shadows of night. Upon this abyss of vast ruins, and formed, also, from a part thereof, an illustrious Patrician, after a long lapse of time, had erected this spacious and dismal palace. So that now this mighty monument, after all the various injuries it had sustained, having become the abode of a powerful family, still preserves, in some measure, its ancient dignity, and is neither deserted nor entirely degraded." So saying, I quitted that monument, because, being well aware how very much the multitude were still attached to the memory of that illustrious young man, I felt conscious that, in the presence of his theatre reduced to this deplorable form, any reasoning of mine

would prove destitute of authority. I feared, likewise, lest the beloved ghost of Marcellus should appear, and thereby excite some sudden commotion amongst the sorrowing shades. Therefore, availing myself of their readiness to follow me, I turned off to the left, towards the Via Lata, and entered upon the Via Flaminia; to the left of which they sought in vain upon the hill which overhangs it for the delightful gardens of Lucullus, and some of the plebeian ghosts had commenced their usual complaints. So that, in order to check them immediately, I exclaimed, "Ye ought rather to be rejoiced at their being no longer any remains of that disgraceful splendour, because the conqueror of Mithridates and Tigranes dragged out here, in dissolute ease, his slothful old age, and, in proportion as the sun of his glory approached its setting, so did it become overcast." By which opinions of mine the multitude being appeased, turned themselves round to contemplate the two Obelisks, which now flank that road on each side near its extremity, near the gate of the city. They perceived, with joy, that one of them was that which had been erected by Augustus in the Campus Martius, and that

the other had also been placed by him in the Circus Maximus, because on each of them there still remains engraved that haughty inscription, "that the Emperor Augustus, son of the Divine Cæsar, having reduced Egypt under the dominion of the Roman People, had bestowed as gifts to the sun these monuments." I, myself, felt particularly glad upon that highway when we arrived at the gate. I expected that the spectres would have bestowed praises on their descendants, who had, in so delightful a spot, erected that imposing mole, and there opened three spacious and splendid routes; to which magnificent entrance the solemn architecture of the Porta Urbana corresponds, whilst the prospect of the two similar temples finished very appropriately the vista formed by the meeting of three streets; so that I considered the spot so well adorned, that the ghosts could scarcely find cause to regret its ancient splendour. And, in fact, I beheld them contemplating these structures with so much wonder, that I was persuaded that my conjecture was not unfounded. They particularly congregated around the Obelisk, and proceeded to read its ancient inscription. Some displayed so much de-

light at seeing this triumphal monument of Egypt, that I conceive they must have been the souls of warriors who had been present, or who had fallen in that expedition. Their fierce aspect, their military robes, their armour, and martial demeanour, the anxiety they displayed to peruse these proud words, and their discourse amongst themselves, all tended to confirm my conjectures.—When, lo! there stood, with disdainful countenance, and eyes intent upon the inscription, the severe Marcus Brutus; and he, so far from showing himself pleased, seemed openly to condemn it. He remained immoveable and provoked amidst the busy hum of the contented populace. Tullius gazed at him, as if expecting some severe opinion, then, approaching him, said:—

"O generous spirit! with what lofty and free sentiment art thou now fraught? Speak out; for well thou knowest, that in this our native land, our studies and opinions were in common, and when truth was dangerous, we boldly uttered it. At the present time, when neither the power of tyrants, nor the perverseness of fortune, can prevail any longer against us, wherefore shouldst thou restrain the noble impulses of

thy eloquence?" And he, turning round, after standing silent for a short time, answered:—

"Now that speaking is of no avail, and is unattended with generous peril, cowardly and vain would be any opinion. But the words here sculptured seem to demand some observations.

"O proud marble, how powerfully dost thou demonstrate the total insufficiency of my blows? Behold, the tyrant being laid low, there arose his son, still more haughty, and inscribed his name amongst the gods; by which impious audacity, driven to madness, he erected to the immense planet a splinter, hewn with difficulty by crowds of slaves, from an Egyptian rock. Incredible folly! that a mortal inhabitant of this opaque, cold, and dark globe, should bestow so proudly a poor atom of granite on that ocean of light. The eye of man cannot support for a moment its rays, although separated by such a prodigious space: its vast size and distance oppress our thinking powers. Without it, there would be here neither motion, nor life, nor vegetation: placed in comparison with it, the whole earth, its empires, and the pomp of human glory, are ridiculous sports

of fortune. But for what generous purpose is this boasting memorial? For the ruin of an illustrious and ancient empire, to preserve which from our oppression, neither innocence, nor justice, nor the intervention of the sea, proved of any avail. Now, then, ye perceive how much the possession of absolute power removes every restraint upon pride,—so that a mortal, forgetful of his own frailty, should dream that he was descended from celestial progenitors, and becoming thus a rival of the stars, should presume to present to them offerings, no longer with words of humility, but with pompous liberality. Behold how the trophies of tyranny withstand the changes of fortune, and erecting their haughty summits, seem, while they threaten and terrify mankind, to doom them to perpetual slavery. Wherefore are not those daggers hung up here for the sake of a formidable example, with which we pierced the heart of Cæsar?"

The enraged ghost pronounced, with a terrible voice, these words, and then disappeared, as if he hated to stand before that monument. Tullius remained sad in silence, and then turning towards me, exclaimed:—

" Alas! what a misfortune that the admirable bravery of that man should have proved so unavailing? But thou, in the meanwhile, mayest tell the Romans, that thou didst behold Brutus still raging with indignation in the presence of these marbles, which bestow the title of Divine, with so much flattery, upon the cruel Dictator."

CONFERENCE SECOND.

At the Pantheon.

THE imperious sentiments of Brutus repressed, in humble silence, the garrulous joy of the assembled ghosts. They turned themselves mutely away, and proceeded along the same Flaminian way. But soon there arose a mingled sound of different voices borne on the breeze, when they observed the extensive and magnificent palaces, which arose on both its sides, certainly more vast and superb than the habitations of their Scipios and Camilli. And when a half of the way had been passed, they seemed never tired of contemplating that column, victorious over time, on which appear sculptured the fortunate achievements of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. In vain the thunderbolt struck it several

times; as it had resisted the rage of the barbarians, so it still rises sublime, unscathed by the fury of the elements. It alone, of all the ancient monuments, remains still standing on its pristine situation, as it was at first placed, as appears from its basis being in no part sunk down, so that the spectres were pleased at flitting about in reality upon their own proper territory. Then I proceeded towards the magnificent ruins of the Temple of Antoninus, which being now become the public custom-house, and encumbered in every hall with merchandise, appears a strange and melancholy instance of the sport of fortune. The imposing aspect of the court, in which still stand the columns of its Grecian style of architecture, but ill accorded, according to the opinion of the crowd, with the vileness of its present office. The murmuring of the loquacious multitude was increasing, so that I turned to the left, proceeding to the adjoining Temple of the Baths of Marcus Agrippa, upon seeing which, I trusted that their complaints would be in some measure abated.

As when there suddenly arrives in port a ship, long believed to have perished in shipwreck

amidst distant seas, and the throng of people, desirous to behold it, run together, so the shades collected as soon as that splendid monument appeared. They stood immoveable and silent contemplating it, and thereby displayed the amazement with which they were penetrated.

The darkness of the night shed an imposing melancholy over the ample vestibule of the temple: the venerable aspect of the Egyptian columns, the illustrious name of Agrippa engraven on the front of the portico, the dusky colour of its walls, still stained with the vapours of the ancient incense, and the smoke of the burnt-offerings, filled the mind with gloomy contemplations. One might fancy there still resounded, amongst the precious columns, the bellowing of the bulls led to the altar; for the majesty of the place excited so powerfully in the mind the remembrance of these splendid rites, that they seemed actually present. Some poor people lay about stretched out in the august portico, who, contaminated with human blood, had betaken themselves to that pure threshold, where the blows of avenging justice do not reach. They, immersed in placid sleep, and forgetful of their

crimes, enjoyed in appearance the tranquillity of innocence. But now commenced the subjects of complaint. As I perceived some of the ghosts were aggrieved at no longer seeing the precious bronzes with which the beams of the portico were once covered, and with which the whole upper convexity of the temple formerly shone resplendent; now, on the contrary, those plates of lead with which it is covered externally, appeared to them a miserable covering for so splendid an edifice. In the inside also of the vestibule, the beams, so naked of ornament, seemed to them like those of some mean village barn. No longer, too, were to be seen those statues in the portico, nor the metallic door-posts of the temple, those of the present day being different and much less precious than the ancient ones. And, indeed, I was aware that Genseric, King of the Vandals, had plundered them, and that they had afterwards been lost, during a shipwreck, in the sea between Sicily and Africa; which historical tradition I withheld, that I might not give any fresh occasion to their bitter complaints. And, for the same reason, I said nothing as to the manner in which these inestimable bronzes

had been appropriated, because I did not expect to be able to justify that spoliation. Therefore I was anxious that the crowds should enter into the temple, that being still so little injured as to demand the tribute of their admiration. Neither was this a fallacious expectation, for when they perceived that, amidst such a general havock, this sacred edifice had remained untouched, and its marble columns still bright with their pristine splendour, there appeared in their countenances a general expression of joy. I alone remained sad, contemplating the ample vault, which, but lately, while tinged with the ancient vapour of the sacrifices, excited a soothing and pious sentiment; but being now bedaubed with white, had lost, like a matron delicately adorned, its decorous aspect. But the Romans were so overjoyed at finding themselves, after the expiration of so many ages, and such a variety of changes in that their celebrated temple, that they paid no attention to this my cause of uneasiness. So that they remained intent on comparing the customs of the present day with those of its original state; the most remarkable of which, appeared to them to be the new ornament of

the busts of illustrious moderns, erected all around the interior walls of the temple. They showed an anxiety that I should address them, and having become silent of their own accord, with their eyes fixed upon me, they preferred their request. I remained still silent, arranging my thoughts in due order, but Tullius broke silence, by questioning me in this manner:—

"Who is that person who bears the mighty name of Camillus?"

And I answered:—"He is a sculptor who adorned this city with his works, and his bust remains here in testimony of his fame. Ye behold here, also, another artist, renowned for the wonderful pictures he painted, who bore the tremendous name of your implacable rival, the Carthaginian. Ye perceive that he was called Hannibal;* but be not enraged, for his art was as much opposed to war as all other peaceful arts. Behold, near to him, this named Rafaelle, on whom nature, in her liberality, had bestowed such a rich profusion of gifts, that, through him, the art was revived, and the glory of the Grecian painters;

Caracci.

nor have we any reason to hope that his powers will ever be surpassed. While he lived, nature was afraid of being overcome, and when he died, of dying with him. Behold some others,—one of whom bears a name illustrious amongst yourselves,—Flaminius,—also a sculptor. That one, at no great distance, bore the name of the triumvir Anthony;* he was a citizen of Parthenope, the wonderful inventor of heroic song, and celebrated throughout all nations. Now, turn your eyes upon this likeness of a dear countryman of ours, the discoverer of the delightful harmonies of the modern lyre, and who now has a monument for his skill in musical execution. Then look here, a little higher up, is the image of a Roman, who but very lately departed from this life, and, with a Greek word, called himself transformed,† because, from a lowly station, he had emerged to the highest fame. The unrivalled sweetness of his verses, like that of musical notes, caused him to obtain a degree of admiration scarcely ever equalled, for he was equally a favourite with the great, and the vulgar, and the learned. Ye may behold, on his

* Paesiello. † Metactasio.

features, that same passion expressed which lights up all his volumes. They will live for ever, unless all taste for learning should be lost in the world. For if your language was diffused through the terror of arms, our own has penetrated into hearts through the medium of its bewitching musical cadence. Behold here, also, some of those who, in your times, were barbarians, but who are now rendered celebrated by their high attainments in painting. This man, who is also called Rafaelle,* succeeded in attaining a distinguished reputation worthy of so great a name. He was a German; but in this, your native country, at the present time, become the universal school of the fine arts, emulating the most illustrious painters, he has left works, upon which time will not throw the veil of oblivion. He, whom ye see there, was born in that Gaul,† so ferocious in your times; his marvellous pencil was the rival of the foremost, and was second to none. 'Lastly, all these are likenesses of men of letters, famous in learning and liberal studies. So that now that glory, which with you was only granted to the all de-

* Mengs. † Nicholas Poussin.

stroying steel, we bestow upon the delightful productions of the innocent arts. Not to homicidal heroes do we erect images within our peaceful temples, but to those celestial geniuses, who, by their delicious fancies, temper the ferocity of manners, and render them refined. They, by their delightful witcheries, penetrating into the breasts of mortals, cement the bonds of social intercourse."

"Certainly," exclaimed Marcus Brutus, showing himself on a sudden, "it is clear that all your arts are effeminate and cowardly, since ye have not erected a single statue to any illustrious citizen for the defence of the government; either, therefore, ye have no enemies, or they must have achieved victory without any difficult struggles. Here ye propose, as an example worthy of imitation by the living, and your posterity, the glory of those arts which we abandoned to the vanquished and fallen Greeks. Here, instead of heroes who perished for their country, I behold celebrated, only lutanists, musicians, poets, painters, agreeable certainly to the soft corruptions of the senses, and preservers of peaceful sloth, but

destructive of all that greatness, force, and excellency, which render nations formidable."

And I honestly answered:—"A lasting peace reigns throughout our Italy; and whenever it is disturbed by hostilities, they are neither very lasting, nor destructive in their effects. At present, no nation in Europe is alone the bearer of arms, as its sole proper profession, nor, despising all the honourable arts of peace, is continually bent on disturbing its neighbours; so that no one so surpasses all others in this power of oppressing the innocent, as was conceded to you by fortune, the accomplice of your iniquitous designs. All live in an armed and menacing state of peace; and if any one nation should obtain, by her victories, a preponderating influence, all the rest are opposed against her; so that, for several centuries, our empires have remained without any extraordinary conquests, and without any lamentable devastations. The consolations derived from the exercise of the arts, and the study of polite learning, and useful sciences, are therefore now held so precious, that it would be considered barbarous and odious to neglect them."

While I was speaking, Marcus displayed in

his countenance the usual gravity of his sentiments. Then, with a bitter smile, he added:—

"I approve much of that respect for learning,—what I blame is, that it should occupy all your attention. I am certain, without any great reflection, that an empire in which there resounds no other fame but that of these monuments, must remain the sport of fortune; for, if you are quite satisfied with this state of sloth, which leaves you a prey to the outrages of powerful aggressors, assuredly ye enjoy no very enviable happiness."

I commenced a reply to these severe observations, and arguments, suited to refute them, were ready in my mind. But the stern ghost, as soon as he had finished his speech, gazed at me with a look of contempt, displaying still more his ancient impatience of every doctrine adapted to humble submission. I perceived, that if I should speak, all my discourse would be to him a mere waste of words; therefore, since nothing stimulates the mind so much as an attentive listener, and nothing is more mortifying than a negligent and scornful audience, I held my peace, and quitted the temple with melancholy reflections.

CONFERENCE THIRD.

New Lamentations of the Ghosts in various quarters of the City; and the strong Opinions of Marcus Brutus.

THIS haughty discourse, although from so great a man as Marcus Brutus, had awakened, nevertheless, in my mind, a painful degree of discontent. But his proud silence overwhelmed my breast with the bitterest grief. Nor was it at all lessened by the profound admiration of his ancient magnanimity, so deeply impressed on my mind; so that, my thoughts being so much engaged, I paid no particular attention to the direction in which I was going, and walked on involuntarily. When, lo, in a short time, I found myself in the Campo di Flora, where once arose the magnificent Theatre of Pompey, and his

Court of Justice. Alas! how unlucky was my approach to such a spot, now that the pride of Marcus Brutus had proved so mortifying to me; because it was in that very Senate-house that he and his fellow-conspirators had stabbed the Dictator. A lofty palace had been placed, by a modern patrician, upon the ruins of that theatre, which still appeared amongst the subterranean cells, and in the external taverns. In front of it, and not far off, stands another palace, of imposing appearance, erected from the spoils of the Amphitheatre of Flavius; and its interior portico is splendid, from the columns taken from that Senate-house of Pompey. On the flank towards the river, and also in the neighbourhood, rises another extensive palace, constructed from the ruins of that same Amphitheatre, from the lacerated bosom of which have proceeded these mighty edifices, which, towering sublimely, appear to insult their ancient mother by their present greatness. The sight of which objects, excited me to consider, in silence, how, upon the Tarpeian Rock, there also now arose an abode of the Patrician race; and how another stood upon the Theatre of Marcellus, formed from its ruins;

and likewise another upon those of the Tomb of Augustus; others, too, upon the Baths of Constantine, upon the Theatre of Balbus, and upon the Royal Palace of Domitian. Neither did such considerations escape these sagacious spirits, who, still more than myself, perceiving these transformations, now lamented that their descendants were living in splendid sloth upon the despised ruins of their most illustrious monuments. Nor could they be consoled when they saw that they, instead of respecting these memorials even as mere objects of curiosity, had completely transformed them, as if through vulgar outrage; as if, besides, there could be any want of that with which prodigal nature has stored the adjoining mountains, lime and stone, so that they should rob the monuments of antiquity for the sake of these paltry materials; next, with open insult, erecting their pompous palaces on their demolished ruins, like conquerors trampling under foot their prostrate rivals. Wherefore, no other sign of exulting victory seemed to be awanting to them, except the sounds of the triumphal trumpets from their lofty roofs. Such were the opinions proclaimed by the murmuring crowds.

Meanwhile, Marcus Brutus stalked pensively around that spot whereon he had executed his memorable exploit. Tullius also contemplated him, and poured forth, at the same time, certain expressions of love towards his country, and of the perplexity of human opinions in forming any judgment upon extraordinary actions. But when Brutus saw, within the hall of the adjoining palace, that statute still standing, before which he had, with his homicidal stilet, overthrown the Dictator, he stood motionless to gaze upon it, and, after a long and solemn pause, exclaimed:—

"Oh truly great! Then in vain did I besprinkle this thy image with such illustrious blood,—in vain did I subdue my filial affection, grasp the steel, close my eyelids, and plunge it in his paternal heart, without having produced any effect worthy of so lofty a determination."

Tullius answered:—"Be not grieved, because great enterprises ought not to be judged by their effects, but by their occasions. Therefore, if thy deed was not fortunate in the event, still it was a wonderful and tremendous example, and which will never more be overwhelmed in oblivion."

While they discoursed upon the very spot upon which had formerly flowed that renowned blood, from twenty-three wounds, I reflected how much opinions were even yet at variance, respecting so admirable an action,—blame and praise being both excited by the consideration that love of country had been mixed up with treachery. And, remaining myself perplexed by these sentiments, I was hurried on by the multitude towards the river, where, while I was passing over by the bridge, the spectres, fluttering like vapour wherever they pleased, stopped to contemplate the island, still existing in the middle of its current. They recollected, with joy, how first a heap had been formed there by the grain collected from the fields of Tarquinius Superbus, being devastated by the populace, and cast into the river; how that hillock afterwards had been increased by the accumulating sands, and had exalted itself into an island, consecrated to Esculapius, the bounteous bestower of long life. They, therefore, still beheld, with the feelings of freedom, that ancient memorial of their hatred to tyrants, and then passed on to the opposite Transtyberine quarter. There, declining to the left, along the

river, they reached that part of the bank, opposite to which rises the Aventine Hill. From the bed of the river emerged the ruins of the Sublician Bridge. Oh Tiber! O circumjacent hills! ye still resound with the joyous shouts sent forth at that celebrated action! Here it was that Horatius Cocles, a descendant of the other conquer-or of the Curiatii, and inheriting all his courage, opposed himself to the attack of the Etruscans. The moon-beam trembled on the bosom of the flood which rippled beneath the breeze. I beheld, wandering on that bank, a spectre of haughty demeanour, clad in armour, who gazed around; distinguished also by this, that he was blind of one eye. Such was Cocles, according to traditions, and therefore I conjectured, that this was he. Already the Romans, with a confused murmur, were praising that generous deed, when, lo, there issued forth a voice from some unknown and haughty spectre:—

"If that enterprise was praise-worthy, these which I shall narrate were still more exalted; because, from this same bridge were thrown, many ages afterwards, as a sport to the Tiber, two several tyrants, who desolated this state, the one

called Heliogabulus, and the other Commodus,—both emperors."

The banks resounded with acclamations of joy at these tidings. Then some recollected, that by that ford the courageous maiden had crossed the river, Clelia, that unfaithful hostage, but extolled for having proved herself superior to her sex; whilst others told how, upon that same bank, the King Porsenna, being encamped, the attempt of Mutius had occurred, who, by the fire on the altar, had punished his right hand for its error, and had thus haughtily baffled the indignation of the King. The presence of these scenes having excited still more the regrets and remembrance of their ancient customs in the breasts of the crowds, they proceeded next in quest of the triumphal way, and of its bridge. Of the former they did not find a single vestige, and of the latter only a few traces within the bed of the river. But not far distant from these, they remarked the Ælian Bridge, even yet majestic, and in the perspective, that superb tomb now become a military bulwark. They stood at first in silence, revering the appearance of that pompous monument, and then wished me to inform them who was that

Hadrian, and in what time he had existed; and I narrated his haughty acts of violence, and his ignominious habits of life: having heard which discourse, Marcus Brutus, again assuming all his severity of style, thus commenced:—

"Narrow and humble was the grave which sufficed to cover these our progenitors, as modest in their own estimation, as they were exalted in their deeds. They coveted no other monument except the reputation of their actions to convey their names to the remotest posterity; because virtue alone can resist the vicissitudes of fortune, and time levels the proudest moles with the humblest cottages. Where now, in so vast a monument, is the handful of ashes of that haughty Emperor? O ye blind potentates, as covetous of applauses, as your merits were insignificant, do ye exalt splendid mausoleums over the dust of the funeral pile, like tyrants imperious even in death? While unsparing time hath attacked these edifices, as enormous as were your vices, it hath left untouched the memory of the latter."

The multitude in silence appeared to yield consent to these reflections.

CONFERENCE FOURTH.

At the Temple of the Vatican, where an indignant Ghost utters a digression upon the present form of the City.

The presence of the extensive ruins of the Mausoleum, and the dignified words of Marcus, were the cause of a respectful silence in the multitude, wherefore some remained mute and looking upon Marcus, others regarding the Monument. But speedily the vast mass of the neighbouring Temple of the Vatican so attracted their view, that it soon absorbed their whole attention. So that, impelled by an irresistible attraction, they proceeded towards it, murmuring like a flood in token of admiration. But when they beheld it nearer, their whisperings ceased, and the crowd stood still once more in silence to

contemplate it. Then some of them recognized the surrounding hills, sacred from those Vaticinations, from which they derived their appellation. And others, although the spot was so much altered in its appearance, still knew it again as the valley of the Vatican, where had been the Circus of Caligula, and the garden of Nero, names for ever accursed. Some again pictured out to themselves the triumphal field, where the preparations were made for that proud procession, and the spot on which had stood the majestic temples of Apollo and of Mars, both deities propitious to the Romans. But if they remembered those monuments which had been swallowed up by time, it were needless to ask if they recognized those preserved from its attacks. Therefore they were agreeably pleased at again beholding that lofty Obelisk, which now rises in the centre of the spacious area of the portico, as being the same which had been erected by Caligula in his Vatican Circus. Admirable instance of the caprices of fortune. This mass of granite, first erected, so many centuries back, by King Nicanor in Heliopolis, and placed by the pride of Caligula in the valley of the Vatican, laid pros-

trate by the barbarians three centuries afterwards, lies neglected for upwards of twelve more, in order that, in the sixteenth, it might be again upraised to the light of Heaven.

Assuredly the Egyptian monarchs had no apprehensions that those immense monuments might not remain for ever in their dominions, nor ever imagined that a remote people, not satisfied with plundering every rich moveable, and filling their ships with gold, and gems, and vases, and statues, so as even to sink them by their cargoes, should even transport to their remoter shores those stupendous masses, with difficulty quarried from their mountains, and only erected by infinite industry. Thus the incredible rapacity of the Romans committed to the sea a weight, such as had never before been supported upon it. Yet still, after such vicissitudes, this Obelisk stands alone amongst all uninjured, so that the spectres considered, with deep surprise, how it could possibly have remained after the ruin of such great empires.

But now their looks were distracted from this monument towards the spacious portico of full three hundred and twenty columns, which, ex-

tending its two immense arms, seems majestically to receive all those who approach to the temple; therefore, the ghosts hurried together in the middle of that circuit, and, breathless, with awe gazed upon it. Two fountains here rushed forth, throwing up their dashing waters to the heavens, which, falling back in a wide and sparkling spray, flowed like molten silver.

The nocturnal zephyr waved the jet of waters, like a tall cypress, while they fell back with varied revolutions into the receptacles beneath. The heavens, the earth, and the whole face of nature, were hushed in calm repose, and not a sound was heard amidst the stillness of night, save the murmurs of the falling fountains. Now the ghosts hurried forward with anxiety towards the immense temple, and rushed into it in a body, like a brook swelled by a summer storm. But, as suddenly seized with wonder, they hung back on beholding the immense cavity scooped out like a cavern in the midst of the tremendous edifice. Then they diffused themselves on all sides, and the first and general opinion pronounced by them, on the ornaments of the interior, was, that they displayed a character of pompous

magnificence, rather than of majestic simplicity. Some ghosts observed, immediately on the left side of the entrance, a basin of porphyry now changed, as they believed, into a lustral urn; and speedily recognised it as being the same in which were enshrined the ashes of the Emperor Hadrian, in that mausoleum they had just seen. Others remarked, in the precious threshold, the Greek marbles, of which the monument of Scipio Africanus, at the foot of the Janiculan Hill, were formerly composed.

"Alas!" they exclaimed, with sorrow, "how vain is the desire of perpetual praise! In this their native land, which thou didst render illustrious by their prowess, so forgotten is all thy glory, that thy heedless descendants trample with deliberate footsteps over thy tomb!"

Others, meanwhile, gazed upon the great altar, around which arose the lofty columns of bronze, standing majestic under the ample vault; and although these are formed of upwards of one hundred and eighty-six thousand pounds of metal, withdrawn from the portico of the Pantheon, yet I heard no complaints, because they saw that a work had been produced rivalling in magnificence what

had been destroyed. Others contemplated, without repining, the two monuments on each side of the lofty throne, the arches and the columns of which are composed of marbles from the Temple of the Sun on the Quirinal, because from these imposing ruins had arisen such splendid mausoleums. But now the crowd flocked around the tomb of that Queen of the North,* who, having of her own accord resigned her sceptre, had lived in Rome in calm retirement;—a wonderful instance of the abdication of a throne, from which she derived more real glory than others have done by their usurpations. Next they gathered around the mausoleum of that sovereign of Etruria, who gave his dominions as a gift to Rome; and sculptured upon which is a representation of the emperor prostrate at the feet of the Pontifex Maximus. The spectres were amazed at perceiving that this native land of theirs was still revered by barbarous kings, humbled before its government with new ceremonies, in imitation as it were of its ancient triumphs. The splendour of the marbles in the pavement, of the gold in

* Queen Christina of Sweden.

the lofty ceilings, of the silver in the burning lamps and candelabra, the varied magnificence of the sculptured mausoleums, of the statues and paintings, filled their minds with incredible amazement; considering which, it appeared to me a fitting occasion to address them thus:—

"Ye behold here, O Quirites! in testimony of our magnificence, such a temple, as possibly was never equalled in your days. Such an immense extent, so much majesty, such a display of ornaments, consider whether there were ever so many in any of yours! Thus, ye see here that wonderful Pantheon, raised up so daringly by us aloft in the heavens." So saying, I pointed out to them the immense concavity, not less vast than that of their ancient temple.

I then saw immediately stand before me the phantom of a man stricken in years, and of middle stature, who, shaking his head, appeared not to concur in my opinion. Wherefore I added, "What displeases thee?" And he answered:—

"A mighty work is this, and almost incredible, because in it is displayed a certain novel audacity, and unheard of in any bygone ages."

Then he held down his head, and remained

silent, with his eyebrows knit, as if in token of morose taciturnity. I therefore urged him to make known his own opinion, whatever it might be, and he, slowly raising up his eyes towards the immense and sublime concavity, broke forth :—

" I pray to Heaven that your empire may not be like unto this ample cavity !"

And I asked him wherefore ? And he answered :—

" Two conditions are most especially requsite in buildings—proportion and solidity. The former, both for the delight of the sight and for adaptation to the end for which they are formed : the latter, in order that they may be not only durable ; but that also, on beholding them from without, or remaining within side of them, the mind may not be disturbed by the disagreeable thought of any disastrous ruin. Now, in this mass, inasmuch as the first requisite seems very apparent, so their appears a deficiency of the latter ; because several fissures are evident in it, and the vast iron zones which surround it, are painful indications of its dreaded ruin. These seem to evince the want of solidity in a building, which, although of recent origin, and unshaken by earth-

quakes, appears scarcely equal to resist any such perils, like a giant which threatens to fall upon the least infirmity. Therefore, I conclude, that instead of your boasting of such a daring undertaking, through which ye believe that you have surpassed us, ye ought rather to be grieved, because, in this vain emulation, ye remain not only inferior, but dishonoured." Although to me these sarcastic words were disagreeable, nevertheless the impending cupola being in that state which the spectre affirmed, I thought it best to abandon its defence. But, in order to divert his attention from that object of his criticisms, I proceeded forth into the open air, and said:—

"Sagacious Shade, thou shalt judge, I hope, this exterior portico worthy of praise, being more majestic than any porch of your temples."

"It may be so," said he, "yet I see that the columns of Marcus Agrippa are not only gigantic, but formed of precious Egyptian marble. Thus all the remains thou beholdest of former ages, have their columns, bases, friezes, and capitals of foreign marbles, and of vast size. Here I behold, on the contrary, no other than Tiburtine stone, with which were constructed, in our days, the

most humble buildings. This, therefore, appears to be rather a mockery of, than any real degree of magnificence. Inasmuch as the design was lofty, so does its execution appear to be inferior; insomuch that, if an honest opinion may not offend thee, I should pronounce that this was the work of a decayed nation, which was attempting the enterprizes of its splendid and wealthy progenitors."

"Thou speakest severely," I added, "because although the city is not at present rich with the spoils of Asia or Greece, nor adorned with bloody triumphs, nevertheless it preserves an appearance not so squalid as thou hast presumed to infer. It is still, amidst all that are at present on the face of the earth, majestic, and worthy of reigning over these hills as the immortal queen of nations. Above your temples, arise others also sublime, and gorgeous palaces above your habitations; the streets, as ye see, are ample and straight; the bridges are spacious and numerous over the sacred river; the gardens breathe at the same time pleasure and magnificence; while, on all hands, your statues arise as an ornament and memorial in the eyes of the nations. Ye perceive here how the

waters play in the vast fountains, and there how sounding rivers, falling into marble receptacles, bring delight to the eyes, refreshment to thirst, and vegetation to the earth. Contemplate the Egyptian obelisks, even these, like Rome, are at times exalted, and at times laid low, but ever victorious over the outrages of time."

While I thus spoke the rigorous ghost was knitting his eyebrows, and, by his silence, appeared disinclined to continue such a conversation. Then I pressed him to declare his own sentiments. So that, being overcome by my instances, he proceeded in this manner:—

"Assuredly this city shines forth in an imposing manner, and does not abandon its ancient aspect of a venerable matron, but seems, like one who, depressed and afflicted, endeavours by her pomp to console herself for her lost riches. These your edifices are, in truth, spacious, and your patricians dwell in extensive royal palaces, rather than in habitations suited to a private family. Against the sides of these the people support their humble and falling hovels, like infirm pigmies by the side of powerful giants. But still these sumptuous pa-

laces have more apparent than real extent; because, although they are of great outward front, and show, and appear to contain spacious cloisters, and porticoes, and galleries, yet, on entering into them, you remain in a confined depth, into which, from their lofty roofs, the light of Heaven can scarcely penetrate. Then, again, the scanty materials with which your edifices are constructed render them so frail, that while the remains of ours, after many centuries, are testimonials of their solidity, yours seem to threaten a speedy ruin. Ye raise, I perceive, your habitations to such a height, that the passer-by must stand almost supine to behold them. But this excessive height is a mark of scanty fortunes; because, without any great expence, edifices may be extended in loftiness, whereas, by adding to them in size, it becomes requisite to add to the foundation.

"Thence, your lofty mansions exhibit continual proofs of their instability, since they are not only shaken by thunder and wind, and at the passing of a carriage through the streets, but even on the very moving of their own inhabitants, they are agitated in a disagreeable manner. Moreover, ye

have erected numerous and majestic temples, in which I perceive no want of marble pillars, because I observe that ye have adorned them with the spoils of ours; but I know not how, they are all deceitful, promising in their front to be composed within of two floors. These vast cupolas, which are exalted so proudly, were not lifted up aloft by us, as ye do at present, because it appeared to us rashness to entrust such a great weight to any other support except the foundation. But ye boldly have placed on high the forms of our temples, rejoicing at having overcome, with illustrious audacity, the timidity of your ancestors. Still ye ought to be apprehensive lest they be not the first to fall into ruins when the multitudes press into them as suppliants upon the occasion of any earthquakes;—improvident structures, through which men may find a tomb, while they were seeking for succour from Heaven. I do not observe at present, as was customary with ourselves, the portico surrounding the temples, so that the pious multitude has no retreat when the gates of these edifices are closed; at which I do not so much marvel, when I consider that, while some amongst your grandees occupy, with their palaces, those

spaces where were our forums, and baths, and theatres, ye have no edifice existing now in which the people can converse with comfort; whence it is manifest that the commodities of life are here restricted to a few individuals.

"In this opinion I am confirmed also by your custom, entirely unknown to antiquity, of using these noisy carriages of iron, upon which, with an elastic support, the seat swings so effeminately. Here are accommodated the few rich, who are dragged with rapidity to their slothful recreations. Thus a minority of the inhabitants, not only occupy in the streets the space of many, but threaten all in their course, unless they quickly withdraw themselves from those chariots where cowardly sloth sits in triumph. Thence there is required in every palace a vast stable for horses, because your rich people can with difficulty make any use of their feet, crippled by long disuse. Then the number of servants, no longer acquired by victories, but withdrawn from the ploughshare to become the drivers of coaches, or hang behind them clothed in sumptuous garments; nor, when the night invites to repose, are these noisy passings to and fro at an end, but insolent couriers

running before with funereal torches, with Bacchanalian arrogance remove the populace from before your face.

" To which extraordinary tumults are also in perfect accordance the metallic instruments placed upon lofty towers, where resound those immense concave bronzes, struck in such a manner that the whole air is made to resound, and even the streets to re-echo; so that in these the noise of the coaches is so great, while aloft there is such confused din of grave and acute sounds, that any foreigner arriving might be induced to believe, from these incredible noises, that the city was filled with numerous inhabitants. But although spacious, its vast walls embrace much and contain but little, for within them are scattered a few habitations, divided by deserted fields. Then the streets appear to be hemmed in by the overhanging palaces, which inclose them like fissures among the mountains, from which you can with difficulty obtain a glimpse of the sky. Here the air is damp and noisome, exactly resembling the beds of a torrent in summer, in which remains the unhealthy mud. Hence there is a notable difference between these streets and our consular high-

ways, adorned with illustrious monuments; and, truly, those were still more delightful, where the ornaments were only tombs, than those here, oppressed by stupendous moles inhabited by living persons, which make one sad by their dismal resemblance to prisons, having all their openings closed up by iron gratings, which likewise show that ye are afraid of hostile attacks being made upon the walls of your homes, and that even then your laws do not secure you from the misdeeds of the wicked.

"With us, there were spectacles of combats in our amphitheatres, representations of naval fights, contests for glory in our circuses, splendid pageants in our theatres, and always in the open light of day, which is by far the most desirable and pleasant. Therefore I am at a loss to comprehend how it can delight you to be squeezed together in halls, from which the rays of the sun are always excluded, formed like hives of bees, with innumerable cells of confined dimensions, and [illegible] the most combustible material, in which dens ye pass your nights, respiring there a sepulchral [illegible]mosphere, and enjoying, by the light of smoky lamps, I know not what tiresome amuse-

ments; at one time, in sorrowful silence, transforming yourselves into strange motley forms, by old-fashioned dresses; at others, in that sickly atmosphere, dancing about the live long night, till, on the approach of morning, ye sally forth like persons risen from the tomb."

When he had thus spoken, he looked all around on the city with a bitter smile, turned upon me his eyes sparkling with anger, and then, with his face bent down, as if he was afraid of the downfal of the lofty cupola, he removed to a distance from the temple, and disappeared amongst the crowd.

CONFERENCE FIFTH.

At the Palace of the Vatican—the young Missionaries, and their visits to barbarous Nations.

I REMAINED for a while struck dumb from wonder, considering how the substance of the thoughts, divested of this flesh, can become so sagacious in the penetration of material objects; because this shade had suddenly become acquainted with a great part of our customs. But stimulated both by curiosity and disagreeable feeling, I requested Tullius to inform me who was that scoffer, and he answered me:—

[illegible] Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, who still retains his natural disinclination to flattery. Learned in his art, still he had not the good fortune to be able to bequeath to posterity any illustrious monument of his skill, and therefore was in the

habit of decrying the works of others, not being able to display any of his own."

I, on hearing this, felt concerned at the condemnations passed by the opinions of so great a genius, and with the crowds, proceeded towards the adjoining palace of the Vatican. They immediately recognized it as having been placed on the same spot where the sumptuous villa of Nero had formerly stood, and remembering it no less than his splendid palace on the Palatine, they remained indifferent spectators of so vast a building. But when once they had penetrated within side, and beheld the marvellous paintings upon all the walls, and the prodigies of those pencils which had imitated the sublimity of the Greeks; when they beheld, treasured up in the immense library, the esteemed volumes of their own times, and innumerable others of various languages and of latter times, in so much, as to be a treasure of all learning, greater than any ever possessed by the most splendid kings in past ages; [redacted] spacious halls, admirably arranged, they beheld the statues of their divinities, and busts of their heroes and celebrated men, and likewise their urns, the inscriptions of their tombs, their altars, he ves-

sels used in celebrating their sacred rites, their household penates, their furniture, their arms, their female ornaments, their coins; when, in a measure, every memorial or fragment of their manners and customs were preserved, as they perceived, not only from curiosity, but with pious veneration; then I observed that all the spectres were influenced by inexplicable admiration, and likewise with tender joy. I observed tears of delight falling from the eyes of many, others with their countenances lighted up with gladness, passed anxiously around, contemplating their own busts and those of their relations. Others again stood before some statue of a celebrated man in silence, and pensively in the act of enjoying his appearance. Some, also, of the countenances which I saw amongst the crowd, seemed to resemble some of the busts there present.

O what unspeakable delight was mine, equal almost to that of Heaven! I was in that moment existing in by-past ages, and living amongst my progenitors. No words can express this gladness, no pen can describe it in fit terms, for extraordinary emotions of the mind cannot be displ[illegible]y ordinary language. I can only say,

that I remained delighted at seeing with how much admiration the Quirites, accustomed to magnificence, contemplated in that palace more than thirteen thousand spacious apartments filled with costly ornaments; because, to a people insatiable of grandeur, and in their own native land so many times overrun by barbarians, and humbled by fortune, I did not hope that I could have presented any agreeable variety of objects which might produce an effect upon their inveterate pride. Amongst many, they attentively contemplated a painting upon the wall of one of the great halls, which represents a king with his face bent down at the foot of the high priest; and, on another wall, they observed pourtrayed battles, and bloody conflicts, and enemies overwhelmed with unforeseen destruction, which actions they considered as being triumphs not less glorious and perilous than those gained by themselves; on hearing which opinions, I consoled myself greatly for the vexation with which my mind had been clouded by the severe remarks of Vitruvius. Meanwhile, the crowds passed to and fro, like a flood dashed by the breeze into many waves, through various parts of that immense

edifice. These penetrated like a mist within the Vatican Palace, while others wandered amidst the delicious gardens; others dipped themselves within the marble basins of the fountains; some disported amidst the shady pathways, while some were gazing upon the incredible cupola of the temple, which towers up in rivalry to the Apennines in sublimity.

As bees ramble from flower to flower, so the spectres appeared to enjoy those innumerable objects. Neither did it seem to me that they would ever have been able to withdraw themselves from their insatiable anxiety to admire them, had they not at length been distracted by another wish still more powerful, namely, that of again viewing the remainder of their native land. Wherefore they having quitted the immense Vatican, again turned round in front of it, and then stretched to the right by the road along the river. But, upon entering it, I led them away to ascend the summit of the mountain which overhangs it. For there lies, in that path, in a humble tomb, the lofty poet of Godfrey, and, therefore, I was afraid that it would be indecent to show it, as being an evidence directly at variance with that

attention which I had several times boasted that we were accustomed to pay to all the fine arts.

" O thou bright ornament of heroic verse, through what destiny does it happen that a wretched tomb covers thee, while I behold everywhere sumptuous tombs erected to dignities, riches, and fortune, and far more splendid than merited. Yet the memory of their names, notwithstanding the pomp of their gorgeous mausoleums, is never spread throughout the world, but lies hushed with the sounds of their funeral hymns. But since capricious prodigality, and the prodigality of vices are so liberal in vain acts of magnificence, it grieves me, that amongst so many of thy admirers, there should not be a single individual to adorn, with an ornamental frieze, this tomb containing thy bones. But however these may be neglected, the harmony of thy sublime poem resounds throughout the skies. Against so celebrated a name, time can effect nothing, neither oblivion, nor fortune, nor the violence of arms, nor the incursion of barbarians, nor the convulsions of indignant nature. Deeply engraven in the hearts of men, it will descend throughout

ages, victorious over every outrage to remote generations."

While I was buried in these reflections, I guided the crowd along the spacious way. On one side, the waters of the river murmured; on the other were prodigious palaces, enriched with admirable paintings, the Janiculan Hill rising above them, covered with delicious gardens. The crowd advanced with me in silence, and we arrived at that spot on the hill, where the fountain, divided into three streams, falls into an immense marble reservoir. Shoals of fish darted through it, brought all the way from the Sabazian marshes, through the long and majestic conduits. The roaring sound of its waters, bursting forth as from a rock, made the air resound.

The spectres gazed at it with stillness, but in their countenances were depicted expressions of delight. Then I wheeled round to the left, returning through the middle of the city. The phantoms followed me, pausing for a while occasionally, according to the wonder excited in them by the objects which presented themselves by the way side. But when he had arrived at the foot of the Pincian once more, they, as if stimulated

by sudden curiosity, assembled together in front of that vast building, on the front of which is engraven, in large letters,—"*Collegium Urbanum de propaganda Fide*," or the Urban College for propagating the Faith. Then there arose a whispering of various voices, as if of a multitude murmuring at some unexpected event. The noise resembled that from the boiling of waters. I listened with much attention, and heard their general opinion to be, that this was a College of Pontifices, destined to propagate, as well as to maintain that worship, which Numa had ordained to be believed with marvellous prudence. Therefore, they were pleased, that after the destruction of so many empires, swept from off the face of the earth like so much dust, that form of worship should have remained uninjured, through which the saying of a Roman, "*I swear by my faith*," had become almost a sort of celestial oracle. Next they thought that this college was called Urban, in order to distinguish it from others of the same kind, dispersed throughout the different provinces, and other parts of the empire, in order to diffuse the same divine degree of integrity in the observation of promises.

Although I admired that oath by which the pious king infused into the hearts of the Romans such a heroic sense of loyalty, that their very words became sacred amongst the nations, nevertheless, constrained by truth to contradict that opinion, I beckoned them to silence, and, having obtained it, commenced :—

" Ye, with your powerful legions, exterminating all those who refused to submit to your empire, extended it from the ocean to the unconquerable Parthians. But that of this city is now diffused over the whole earth. The naked Antipodes among their forests, coëval with the world, bow down before it ; and before it fall down powerful nations, separated by the vast expanse of ocean. Here young pupils, from every nation of the earth, differing in their language, aspect, and manners, but all educated in the same sort of learning, are trained for the same sublime purpose, that they may propagate throughout the universe, at all hazards, those heavenly doctrines of peace, and banish from the world the atrocious and barbarous habits of savage life. Neither violence, nor wounds, nor weapons, nor menacings, nor bodily insults, nor bloodshed, are employed

in achieving these conquests, but only fraternal benevolence and the insinuating persuasions of humble missionaries. These endure not only the inconveniences and fatigues attendant upon long journeys through the deserts, and voyages over tempestuous seas, but the cruel insults of ferocious hordes, daring all, even unto death, in order that they may extend this heavenly peace to every climate under the sun. But if their meekness tires out the cruelty, and their own blood slakes the thirst of the barbarous, so does the divine suavity of their doctrines win over the consent of polished nations. Thus, they purchase more nations to this city than you could ever subjugate even by means of all your wonderful efforts of audacity. People living naked in caves, without the holy ties of marriage, or love of their offspring, in a perpetual state of warfare, and wandering through forests, deprived of every hope of Heaven, and unworthy of remaining upon earth; who trade in human blood; men most ferocious, not only in their aspect, but in all their habits, who put to death, in slow torments, the captives taken in war, and then devour their dead bodies, keeping their scalps for trophies, and mak-

ing flutes of their bones, and cups of their skulls, with which they get intoxicated in the solemn festivals of their atrocious idols; barbarians who have never known the divine bliss of pardoning, who even believe vengeance to be a virtue, and that forgiveness was ignominious,—when this delightful doctrine was once instilled into their breasts, like wild beasts rendered tame, have licked the hands which caressed them. Then, in a short time, the children became so divested of the ferociousness of their parents, that they became actually ashamed of it. If ye filled the universe with blood and lamentations, lo! now pacific messengers, through a divine impulse, propagate the empire of universal benevolence."

Even while I was yet speaking, Tullius testified, by his looks, both wonder and delight at such an institution, and hardly had I finished before he commenced:—

"No longer, then, are ye stained with blood ye seven hills;—no longer, O capitol! art thou looked upon by kings as the cruel resting-place of their ignominy. Rome, no longer ferocious, hath yet a vast empire by means of the arts of peace, and her own more humane triumphs. Such an

education was never yet proposed by the most wise, nor ordained by the most illustrious law-givers, so that numerous dominions have been founded, extended, and sustained in open violation of all right reason. Thence, it is clear, that, through the excellence of your principles, and the sublimity of your object, through its own sole and marvellous equity, such an empire cannot be the ordinary creation of men, who have always acted in a contrary manner, but must be some extraordinary prodigy of the heavens."

Then he was silent, and cast downwards his eyes. No longer did it seem that any fit words could flow from his eloquent lips, not one being at all adequate to so sublime a discussion, so that this silence was like a cloud that foretells the approach of a storm.

CONFERENCE SIXTH.

Discussions upon the present Empire of Rome.

I stood in admiration, that lips so eloquent should thus remain silent. But as the great orator remained mute, I became more audacious, in consequence of his last remarks, and thus proceeded:—

"Yes; this second Rome, like a phœnix arisen from its ashes, hath attempted more sublime flights. She hath changed with the vicissitudes of time and of fortune, the means, but not the object of universal empire. You, through force of arms, while we, by means of oracles, have, in our times, established one in terror, or in veneration, —and it is difficult to say which is the greater. But of empires founded by means of successful violence, all history is full, more than is meet

for the happiness of nations. This, on the contrary, is the only one generated in utility, increased by common consent, and confirmed by persuasion. Tyrants, turning pale at its aspect, have wielded their sceptres with a trembling hand. From the hills of the Vatican a voice hath gone forth disposing of their empires; at whose sound some have descended in humiliation, whilst others have been exalted to their vacant thrones."

"What sayest thou?" exclaimed Brutus, "and where was there ever any strong power without arms,—meek and tremendous at the same time,—gentle and violent? Even for intellectual spirits such as we are, fleet, pure, incapable of sleep, these thy opinions seem quite incomprehensible."

I quickly added:—"I am glad that such a spirit as thou art doth not understand me, because these events, quite out of the usual course, are even to us as incredible as true. But if your sublime minds are struck by these events, and feel not more wonder than faith, that happens, because an extrordinary impulse of Heaven, with the pomp of inexplicable events, confuses all human wisdom. To light up the mind with heroic education, to inure the body to fatiguing ex-

ercises, not to dread, but to despise and even court death, are the means by which ye humbled monarchs. Your triumphs were the effect of torrents of blood, and of ages of disastrous sufferings; but this high priest of the Vatican hath triumphed by the sole employment of his divine speech."

The spectres regarded me with astonishment, as if they had heard some extraordinary discourse, and were silent, in token of their contempt. But I, still more excited by their silence, said:—

"In those precious volumes, which have been spared us by the waves of time, our ancestors before us have admired, and we of the present time still admire, as being almost supernatural undertakings, those obstinate and illustrious feats of arms of yours, with which ye desolated the world; but now fortune hath conceded to me, that I should excite your wonder in an equal degree. Yes; your empire took its rise from ferocious marauders;—this sprung up from a beneficent humility. Yours combated from the moment of its birth, because every one attempted to destroy it, as if it were a devouring monster;—this is universally favoured, on account of its benignant

usefulness. To it the nations submit themselves, not from violence, but from the powers of persuasion. Neither lictors, nor rods, nor axes, nor fetters, but loyalty, candour, modesty, counsel, make the powerful bow down before it without baseness, and triumph over the heart. And whereas we see in history, that empires have been augmented, by means of frauds, rapines, and crimes, this is a single example of what has been produced by universal good-will. Scarcely had it been called into existence, when a barbarous king, denominated from his barbarity the Scourge of God, endeavoured to crush it in its humble cradle. But his prodigious army had no other effect, except to render the sacerdotal triumph more splendid. What I am now going to narrate is a historical fact, of unquestioned authenticity. The sovereign Pontiff went forth from these walls in dismay, and unarmed, and had a secret conference with the exterminating king. He, as if overtaken by divine terror, fled not only from Rome, but rapidly from the whole of Italy. These prodigies having become in a manner usual, afterwards our ancestors beheld another ir-

barous monarch,* when he was just about to put an end to this empire, become also disheartened by the sacerdotal voice, and then offer up his armour, his diadem, and purple robes, at the tomb of Peter. Then, in order to prove still more, that an extraordinary degree of power resided in this sacred speech, another ferocious king,† not only bowed himself down with like humility, but, from a haughty conqueror, becoming a humble prisoner, clothed himself in the habit of contemplative silence, and passed in sacred solitude the remainder of his life."

While I was thus talking, I observed expressions of deep amazement displayed upon the Roman countenances of the spectres, who gazed mutually on each other, and seemed to inquire, by signs, some explanation of such unexpected events. But a profound stillness showed that their understandings could not at all fathom these mysteries. I, with some astonishment, observed, that even Tullius was perplexed and mute. Was it possible, thought I, that such a transcendant spirit

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* Luitprand, King of the Lombards.

† Rachis, his successor, became a Benedictine Monk.

cannot comprehend it. Yet so it was. Therefore I, being moved by his respectful silence, turning myself towards him, continued:—

"O Tullius, great were the prodigies of thy eloquence, but this thy taciturnity, exalteth those which I have just narrated; after which, be not amazed if monarchs and emperors made offerings of the hair of their heads to the Pontiffs of the Vatican.*"

At these words, I observed, that some ghosts, of plebeian appearance, appeared to smile, when I, indignant at their vulgar scoffs, exclaimed with animation:—

"Audacious shades, from what strange ignorance do ye deride this mark of the worship, which was by your own heroes practised towards your gods? Must I remind you, that Achilles made an offering of his hair to the river Sperchius."

They were then humbly silent, and I proceeded:—

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* Constantine Second, in the year 684, offered the hair of his sons, Justinian and Heraclius, to the Pontiff Benedict the Second;—to whom the King of the Bulgarians paid the same homage.

"Your treasury, which was created by means of bloodshed and rapine, filled the provinces with lamentations, and Rome with vices. Here, on the contrary, treasures were accumulated by spontaneous offerings, which were poured in for the purpose of assuaging human sufferings, propagating the doctrines of charity, and adding to the beauty of the temples, and erecting sacred edifices. But setting aside, for the present, these modest triumphs, in which ye could not emulate us, I now contend with you for our superiority in greater."

The spectres waved to and fro, like a flood before the morning breeze, more moved by anxiety than by anger; and I, from their magnanimous reception of me, having become a more powerful disputant, launched forth in my harangue:—

"The corrupt and insidious responses," said I, "of your celebrated oracles, were accustomed to flatter the fortune of those in power. The Macedonian despot, stained with the blood of Greece and of Asia, that ferocious conqueror of the world, when he entered into the Sanctuary of Jupiter Ammon, was proclaimed son of that divinity by the cowardly priests. And thou, Mark Antony,

when tired out with the atrocities of the triumvirate, traversed, for thy amusement, both Asia and Greece, leaving there disgraceful traces of thy infamous and cruel manners. Yet thou wert received in Ephesus, and afterwards in polished Athens, with opprobrious sacred rites, like a new Bacchus, and didst permit such a foolish deification in these ridiculous and shameful ceremonies. To thee, afterwards, O Dictator, whilst thou wert yet in life, to thee, with all thy show of virtues, but a flattering tyrant, thy country decreed temples, incense, festivals, priests, and statues, at the time when it was completely thy slave. Behold, on the contrary, in Insubria, our magnanimous Pontiff, shutting the doors of the temple in the face of the emperor, contaminated by the massacre of the Thessalonians. The minister of celestial wrath, he extended his sacred hand to the breast of the crowned sinner, and pushed him back from the divine threshold. That monarch was powerful and fortunate: the priest was his vassal. Yet he infused into his heart such a degree of repentance, that he expiated, in humble penances, those haughty atrocities."

"What sort of an empire, then, is this," ex-

claimed Brutus, " to which men are so submissive, that they appear stupified !"

And I answered :—" It is such an one as fills wickedness with dread, persuades the understanding, and descends into the heart. Now, then, if ye prized that greatly wherein ye excelled, the forcing of men's bodies to yield obedience, how much more would ye not have prized that dominion over men's minds, and the power of subduing others by the superiority of intellect. Not without cruel wars, and memorable misfortunes, were ever founded, or destroyed, or transferred, the diadems from one to another generation. But this supreme Pontiff crossed over the Alps, deposed from its ancient throne a cowardly race, and placed there an illustrious family, which, by its magnanimous actions, upheld it. The crown of this great kingdom was withdrawn, and bestowed with placid rites. The despot was mute, and the exalted prince was not arrogant. A sacred silence showed the reverence of all. Which revolutions, superficially considered, might be judged by some to be audacious, although favoured by fortune. But whoever considers them with attention, will discover, that they were directed by

the motives of wisdom; because the dispositions of men's minds, and of those times, required that the bishop's crosier and the sword should mutually support each other,—of which the effects were wonderful. The new sceptre of the Gauls, as if bestowed by Heaven, was extended over obedient and prostrate nations; and the sacerdotal dominion was exalted amongst the monarchs, and was established, like them, on a throne."

Said Brutus, as if contrary to his nature, with a smile:—"Certainly it was a strange caprice of fortune, that that same people which had before so nearly brought ruin upon Rome, and insulted the majesty of our senatorial progenitors, should afterwards bow themselves down in reverence before the capitol."

And I added:—"Thou shalt perceive, O Marcus! that our Rome, so dissimilar to thine in other respects, is yet alike in this particular, that when it appears to be upon the very brink of ruin from a concourse of disasters, it defies its perverse destiny, and rises up again more tremendous and fortunate. A horde of barbarians, coming from the caves of the north, appeared to threaten Italy with utter destruc-

tion. But at the very beck of this sacerdotal hand, events are brought to a most favourable termination. The dominion of the barbarians being for ever extinguished amongst us, the majesty of the Roman empire has again arisen here with such splendour, that the lapse of ten centuries has not obscured it. Now that great domination for which, with such a load of crimes, ye, in your fierce contention, O triumvirs! did tinge with blood the rostra, and cover Italy with proscriptions, and, in the struggle, carried the flames of war over Pharsalia, Philippi, and the billows of Asia; that dominion, I say, did our ancestors see bestowed, and taken away by an unarmed hand, because favoured by Heaven. They saw exalted to your empire, by its awful power alone, a warrior of private condition, and in whose progeny, now become powerful and glorious, is still preserved that illustrious heritage. By the same power they also witnessed, in the adjoining Magna Græcia, the creation of a new kingdom, which still yields reverend tokens of this ancient favour. At this juncture there was seated upon this throne one of the most incomparable men, who ever yet existed, the glory of all his Insti-

gated by his own vast mind to projects never before attempted by the most formidable conquerors, he was the first that ever cited, to the severe tribunal of the temple, all the empires of the earth, as at the sound of the celestial trumpet. For although such lofty flights are exposed, by their very difficulty, to ruinous downfalls, nevertheless, such was the condition of those times, and the heavens seemed so much disposed to favour them, that there followed consequences corresponding with these marvellous intentions. The Emperor * bowed down before the sacerdotal slipper, clothed in a squalid robe, with a trembling frame implored mercy, and then sinking beneath his misfortunes expired. What do I say? Were not the despots likewise of Iberia, Lusitania, Batavia, Britannia, Dania, Sarmatia, Bohemia, Pannonia, Liburnia, and Dalmatia, also obedient to this triumphal throne? That image of your poems, showing Neptune, disposer of the ocean, and exciting it either into tempests, or composing it to calms at his own pleasure, might be quoted as a fit allegory of these events. With his awful

* Ulric the fourth.

foot he crushed one sceptre, and disposed of another by his sacred hand. Meanwhile, throughout these hills, there resounded that formidable voice, exclaiming, "*Let him perish who shall not dip his sword in blood.*" But if ye are still pleased, O Quirites! with the humiliation of kings, from any old recollections of the overbearing pride of the Tarquin's, I presume that ye cannot produce any example like the following, which was actually witnessed by our ancestors: A powerful monarch of Germany * implored from the sacred throne the imperial diadem. While it lay prostrate before the feet of the pontiff, he, in order to demonstrate, by a memorable act, how completely it was in his power either to render the crown majestic or contemptible, spurned it from him with his foot, and sent the golden circlet rolling along the ground."

"I did not believe," interrupted Atticus, "that it had been possible to exceed the haughtiness of our Consul Popilius, who obliged the King of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes, to declare himself either friend or foe, before he allowed him to

* Ulric the Fourth at the feet of Celestine the Third.

quit a circle which he drew around him on the sand."

And I answered:—"No one was grieved that the authority of this throne was so great; because, at that period, all nations were so much convulsed, and their minds had become so depraved through a long series of disasters, that all justice and equity had been banished from the world, and it had become an object of scorn, all laws being annulled, and violence and fraud alone triumphant. When Greece was ravaged by robbers, Hercules and Theseus opposed themselves to them, and the utility of their actions caused their names to be inscribed amongst heroes. Thus, in these latter ages, when men had become despisers of all legitimate authority, it was a special act of Providence that this, at least, should be reverenced, without which it is probable that all civilized orders would have been thrown into confusion; so that it became the only port in the universal tempest caused by corruption. Nay, more: From these hills were assigned the boundaries of empires, even on the vast and unmeasurable ocean. The Vatican, become the umpire between the rival navigators of newly discovered seas, divided between them the earth

from south to north, in so much, that the very confines of the world appeared to be laid open to this government." Then Pomponius, with his usual honest facility to enter on discussions, asked me:—

"Thou who extollest so much the exceeding equity of this empire, how can'st thou maintain that it belonged to it to have any authority over the face of all the waters which encircle the earth, and which are as free to all mankind as to the fishes which reside in them?" And I cheerfully made answer:—

"Two powerful nations had extended themselves over them, and to their prodigious cupidity they even appeared of bounded limits. Their audacious ships ploughed billows never before visited by any keel. Their mariners, rivalling the sun, disdained the confines of the land, and with joy fixed their eyes upon constellations never before beheld by their ancestors. Another hemisphere, hardly conjectured in your times by the most sagacious intellects, and of which the very surmise had been scouted by many, excited vast hopes of founding new empires of unbounded extent, and of incredible riches in gold and preci-

ous stones. Those fierce navigators, who had set shipwrecks and tempests at defiance, and subdued infinite nations and boundless shores, humbly besought from the Vatican, as a boon, all that they had previously acquired by cruel arrogance. Neither arms, nor deserts, nor ocean, then any longer retained this power, which diffused itself now over all the climates of the world. Therefore, new Rome, even in assuming this authority, only exercised the privileges which had been spontaneously conceded, and pronounced those oracular decrees which had been submissively requested from it. Say, then, in what did she commit any outrage upon justice?" Pomponius added:—

"But the effects of this formidable oracle might turn out very fatal to the coast occupied by your navigators, thirsting, possibly, as much after plunder as glory. For if, in one portion of the earth, its inhabitants had ever been engaged in warfare, that terrible sentence offered the remainder, splendid from its treasures, to desolating conquests. Now thou, who feelest so much horror at our wicked deeds, wherefore dost thou exult in these which are so much worse?"

Cæsar, now interposing, exclaimed:—"O, too

gentle Atticus! so subtle in thy moral investigations, so cautious in thy opinions respecting glory, and so backward from all public feeling, how could any one possibly remain a quiet spectator at beholding such illustrious deeds and new combats. What mind not glowing, but even lukewarm in some degree towards all glorious enterprises, would not have embarked in those? I myself, who desired so much to invade the shores of Britain, excited by an invincible wish to discover these barbarians, separated by such a narrow sea, how would I not have dashed into the ocean to behold immense empires and unknown nations. Assuredly it would be mere stupidity not to be excited by objects so grand and so novel."

I, before mortified by the bitter opinions of the one, and now comforted by the agreeable ones of the other, proceeded:—"The Vatican did not concede, as thou hast imagined, the extermination of the world, but only put an end to these tremendous dissensions. Marvellous and delightful power, which, without arms, restrained in the trackless ocean, where no laws are heard, such fatal and bloody struggles. These would have been perpetual, had not the Supreme Pontiff of

peace extended his right arm over these argonauts. Through which voyages this globe, of which a small portion only was known to you, and which, in your ignorance, you considered boundless, became to our mariners insufficient to the vast extent of their desires. For, if thou blamest that sublime wish of traversing the whole earth, in order to gain a knowledge of its inhabitants, its various fruits, and numberless animals, in order to bring from every region whatever may minister to the comforts or pleasures of life, it would seem that thou art no longer similar to what thou once wert, when thou didst comprehend, in thy benevolence, the whole of the human race."

Said Pomponius:—"As I loved it honestly, so I was not deceived by these illusions through which men are rendered miserable by the hope of gain."

I now calmly added:—"In the most vigorous bodies the attacks of disease are ever the most acute. Riches, then, in proportion to their abundance, bring with them anxieties almost equal to the pangs of poverty. The dread of shipwrecks

keeps the eye-lids of the rich merchants from being closed in repose. The lord of extensive fields hears with horror the clashing of the warring elements; and even those arts which yield a sincere delight, do not excite our senses unless they are mixed up with something pungent. Thus, our viands are hardly exquisite without an admixture of something bitter; nor are musical sounds delightful, except by the artful introduction of discords. Even love, that sovereign of human pleasures, is the slave of these two tyrants, infidelity and death: And glory, too, that envied reward of noble enterprises, is neither obtained nor preserved without vexations. Finally, intellectual contemplations, which appear to be such a pure delight, when any new truth, either unforeseen or sought after, is discovered, are yet full of pangs through our useless efforts, deluded expectations, and from that cruel desert of ignorance in which our thoughts wander; so that it is manifest, that our blessings, even the greatest, are only the nearest to greater evils. Therefore, it is not a matter of wonder, that extraordinary deeds are not exempt from severe disasters. Numerous evils were carried by our navigators to those na-

tions separated from us by such an immense ocean; but they were likewise the bearers of many benefits, and much useful knowledge and delightful arts, by which they were converted from a savage life to peaceful civilization. At the present time, the globe, although inhabited by an infinite variety of nations, distinct in their forms, languages, and customs, yet, like a single people, makes a mutual interchange of all their various natural productions. Thence are derived remedies unexpected for many maladies, which had before refused to yield to the powers of art, and new delights to the mind, and grateful articles of food. Innumerable ships plough every sea;—mariners now disdain to follow beaten tracks, but are ever attempting new ones; and, after disastrous voyages, bring back admirable novelties. Some turn their prows to the icy poles, and are scarcely driven back by the rigour of insufferable cold;—others proceed to inhospitable coasts, and there remain the prey of barbarians, or of monsters;—others shipwrecked upon distant rocks, look sternly upon the tempestuous sea. In comparison with which enterprises, the expeditions of your argonauts appear to be mere sports, as well as all those vaunted

expeditions of the Phœnicians and Carthaginians."

But added the Dictator:—"How many centuries have ye been occupying this immense hemisphere?"

And I answered:—"Of these enterprises such was the rapidity, that it may with great propriety be expressed in that sentence of thine, when thou wert victorious over Pharnaces."

He smiled with pleasure, possibly remembering that saying of his,—*Veni—vidi—vici.* But the wary captain promptly added:—

"Then ye must have had some terrible advantage, either in arms or in discipline."

I, admiring that sagacious conjecture, commenced:—"From the time that we launched our ships into these immense billows, we increased them in bulk, in proportion to the greater struggles with the elements which they were destined to encounter; wherefore, the oar became an inadequate instrument, and we trusted to the disposal of the winds all our fortune. To their tyranny, stretching out immense wings of canvas, our vessels skim over the billows with such art, that the winds and waves appear to be subdued

by them. For we have not only discovered a better mode of using the magnet; but by celestial observations unknown to you, and by a new and artificial manner of measuring time, the mariner discovers his actual situation, and the spot to which he is going. To which sagacious inventions this, greater than all, is added:—It is now upwards of eighty lustres since a destroying genius revealed that terrible secret, by which the thunder of Jove is imitated. Nor with that did human arrogance remain satisfied, but forced ere long the dreaded arrow to wing its flight in vain wheresoever it pleased, whilst this human thunder is conquered by no science."

"What!" exclaimed Brutus enraged; "the lightning is ravished from Heaven, and given to you!"

And I, undaunted, proceeded:—"An exploding powder, compressed into tubes of bronze, vomits forth death and destruction, overthrows towers and rocks, and tears in pieces whole ranks, even when at a great distance, with irreparable havock. Which engine, so dreadful in itself, is rendered still more so by its accompanying clouds of smoke and tremendous explo-

sion. Thus our combatants scatter their thunder and lightning both upon the fields and the bosom of the waves; and as our haughty ships bound lightly over the waters, they add to the roar of the tempest the destructive powers of fire. O, Julius! thou thyself wouldst admire the spectacle afforded on the ocean by these collisions with all the elements."

Then Pomponious, rather mournfully, exclaimed:—"Alas! how fertile is the ingenuity of man in producing fatal, but how slow in effecting beneficent inventions!"

Thus saying, there was expressed in his eyes that kindliness of feeling which, when living, existed in his heart. But the phantoms of the Dictator, and Pompey, and Brutus, and others, of warlike character, crowded around me anxiously, and in their countenances shone forth astonishment mingled with ferocity. Therefore I paused, awaiting, with reverence, their discourse; and Cæsar proceeded:—

"In our battles, fortune had a large share; but in yours she must be all in all, for terror, that tyrant of warfare, must entirely deprive the combatants of their senses. These dreadful ex-

plosions of yours, joined to the thundering noise which follow them, must, by dazzling the eyes, and stunning the ears, petrify the heart with terror, which dreadful appearance of inevitable death did not attend our warfare, where the blows admitted of being warded off. Therefore, in our battles, death seemed, in some degree, to hide his fierceness; whilst, in yours, he makes a display of all his horrors. For if the wind, by exciting clouds of dust, was even with us at times the occasion of a defeat, assuredly the darkness which must envelope your combatants must make them resemble madmen struggling in the dark. But I am grieved that courage has thus become defrauded of so large a portion of its deserts, so that fortune can thus hold it in scorn."

"But," said I, "anxious to discover the maxims of so great a commander, "if it were thy lot now to carry on war with these our arms, to what wouldst thou direct thy chief attention?"

"To that," replied he, "which was ever my aim, the rapidity of the attack; which, if it were then useful with us, must be now of the first necessity with you. There can be no better expe-

dient for securing victory than by rapidly charging and wresting those thunderbolts from your enemies."

Then I heard a joyful shout from amidst the crowd:—"O, what a masterly opinion!"

Meanwhile Cæsar showed by his eyes how deeply he was reflecting upon these speculations. But Brutus, turning round sharply towards me,—

"Now, then," said he, "that the tyrants of the earth have usurped the thunderbolts of Heaven, their pride, always great, must be swelled out beyond all limits. Equally tremendous with Jove, I suppose they have arrogated to themselves titles of wonderful authority; amongst which, thy Vatican being superior to all, what pompous title can now content it?"

I sedately made answer:—"The arrogant titles of power sound odiously on the ear, and awaken indignation in the heart. When ye ascended the throne, ye called yourselves august and divine, but this sacred monarch, moderate amidst all his good fortune, hath styled himself simply the servant of the servants of the deity."

"What modesty of words!" exclaimed Bru-

tus; "and how much at variance with his haughty deeds!"

And I quietly added:—"These dealings were with men, and not with Heaven; there is nothing inconsistent in being high-minded towards the former, and submissively humble to the latter. On the contrary, it was proper for so much greatness to acknowledge its divine source."

He was mute with reflection, and Pomponius then commenced:—"Thou hast narrated down to the present times a series of events miraculous from their prosperity, and incredible from their long duration. But certainly there never yet has been any empire, however just or wise, which had not some troublesome enemy. Boundless authority brings with it the germs of envy and contention; therefore I distrust in that everlasting felicity with which thou hast displayed to us the manner in which this marvellous sceptre has been handed down through a long succession. I conjecture that it must have had some terrible enemy, which hath menaced it with ruin equal to its grandeur."

And I answered:—"Subtle are your opinions, when divested of this frail tenement, un-

der which we bend; as in a powerful and immense mirror, ye seem to contemplate every vicissitude. An illustrious impostor, sprung from the deserts of Lybia, and fiery as the sands of Africa, pretended that an extraordinary volume had been dictated to him by the voice of Heaven, and that he had been even sent as a messenger from the Deity. His eloquence was of steel, and his argument was bloodshed. He hewed off the heads of those who refused to yield him their consent, and tore open the breasts of all those who opposed this violent perversity; and yet, so great is the insanity of superstition, that, by the very measures for which it ought to have been abominated, it was diffused with veneration over the world. Intoxicated with prosperity, born in fraud, and nursed in fury, always thirsting for blood, it hated, and was bound to hate, this empire of peace, and glowed with the wish of rivaling and contending for a superiority over it.

"It inflamed its fanatic and warlike followers to attempt our destruction, and they filled the earth with bloodshed and terror, in the name of Heaven. At such audacious violence, the nations became astonished, so that we beheld the crafty

Numidian, and the ferocious Mauritanian, and the illustrious kingdoms of Antiochus, Mithridates, and Alexander, prostrate themselves before it; while, in Babylon and Byzantium, new and formidable thrones were erected by means of falsehood and terror.

"Thus haughtiness, carrying on a contest with humility, and benevolence with oppression, became a spectacle for the world to contemplate. Nor was there ever a more flagrant instance of the fatality of human error, than this of immense nations receiving, as the voice of the Eternal Spirit, a volume greatly inferior to any yet written by man. In opposition to which, formidable delirium, the Vatican governor of the world, sent forth innumerable armies for many centuries, like the waves of a deluge. These collected together at the sound of the trumpet of St Peter, of all sexes, ages, and conditions, as well as of all nations, crossed over the sea by perilous voyages, overjoyed to die in fighting against that ferocious ignorance. And, indeed, Rome, which had at first desolated the world, then proved its preservation by checking that devouring monster. Wherefore it may boast, that divested of arms

itself, it yet directed all those of Europe against the fierce Byzantian, dissipated in that great undertaking, the treasures of the temple, and erected its glorious standard upon the humbled Hellespont."

Cæsar then extending forth his right hand, as if enjoining me to silence, interrupted:— "Thou exaltest deeds excited by this sceptre, but executed by others. Of these monarchs none could sustain the sight of battles. Yet no commander ever obtained constant obedience from his troops, except by showing them his own contempt for death; therefore, the authority of these enterprises appears to me more wonderful than generous."

"Thou perceivest," replied I, "without being perplexed, even in that, an order of things altogether new, and in which is displayed an extraordinary celestial influence. Indeed, even thy own wonder favours this doctrine. For it so happens, that one individual, who in this long race of Pontiffs, crowned with olive, aspired to twine the laurel around his brows, did adorn himself with thy name, as a lucky omen to imitate thee in fame. And although, from the state of those times, he remained inferior thereto; nevertheless,

it appears that there was not awanting a greatness of mind which deserved it. He afforded a new example by leading on armies, and collected the scattered fragments of his empire. Neither were there awanting detractors to blame him for that which thou hast judged requisite, thinking it unbeseeming to cover the sacred head with a helmet, and to stain with blood that pious right hand, in place of praising the just and magnanimous design, and that which always brings applause,—valour in carrying it into effect."

"Certainly," said he, "those who extol the warlike efforts produced by the instigations of the Vatican, are not consistent with themselves if they blame him. Because, between exciting them by means of authority, and executing them in proper person, if there be any difference, it is this, that the intention in both cases is the same, but that there is much more generosity in the latter."

I, in order to withdraw from the argument, concluded: "At present, after such exceeding prodigies, time, as if tired of their production, requires no extraordinary enterprises. Behold the white standard of peace floats triumphantly over the capitol, thus inviting men's minds to every de-

lightful study. A tranquil glory is diffused around it, the rays of which are no longer rendered ruddy by blood. Thus Athens, the era of its martial renown being passed, acquired yet another by opening its arms to the arts of peace, and to all the delightful recreations of intellect and genius."

Epilogue of Cicero.

With such and some other sentiments, the discourse expanded itself amidst the vastness of the subject, like a ship upon the ocean. Numerous and various were the queries proposed by the Romans, anxious to understand these later events. I narrated them in a spirit divested of prejudice. Meanwhile, Tullius listened both to me and to his fellow countrymen, regardless of his own eloquence. That venerated silence seemed the more to impose it on me, wherefore I ceased, and he, as if aroused from profound thought, having stretched forth the right hand that had swayed the Comitia, the multitude, with reverence, gathered around, as if he had been still in the rostrum. He then commenced:—

"In all human revolutions, more especially those of any great importance, there is always mingled, from the very necessity of fortune, some sanguinary proceeding. And, indeed, the very greatness of power excites the mind to plans of insatiable ambition, and produces aversion to those obstacles which stand in their way. This, like a feverish thirst, is not to be quenched by any draughts.

The desire of power increases with power, and the understanding, intoxicated by prosperous events, aspires to what is incredible. Yet it is proper to moderate the severity of these judgments, considering that, though unheard of, an empire has been given to men, who are never exempt from earthly perturbations. And, therefore, it is not extraordinary, that some one amongst them should have yielded under them; but it would have been really much more so, if amongst so many, no one had displayed a degree of frailty. But human opinions are uncertain upon all occasions, and particularly in respect to those of great consequence; therefore it should awaken our astonishment, that upon this portentous empire opinions are still at variance. Wherefore some, since they no longer

dread its authority, have changed into an opposite degree of haughtiness their bypast humiliations, and enraged at the necessity which obliged them to bow down before it, have now exalted themselves the more in consequence. Others, forgetful of the crowns obtained from, or upheld by it, have opposed to immense benefits boundless oblivion. Others have ascribed such a degree of prosperity more to the general overthrow of states, than to any better cause, as if the understandings of men had been lost in wandering through dark ways, and discouraged by continual adversity. But whosoever will reflect deeply upon such vicissitudes, will perceive that the durable, great, and inexplicable blessings which this supreme sacerdotal virtue diffused throughout the world in ferocious times, conciliated men's minds in its favour, and thus imparted to it strength, of which it availed itself with profound counsel, adapted to the stubbornness of their rude understandings. Neither let any one imagine that such great and incredible enterprises, through such a series of years, could be carried on without very penetrating and exalted understandings. But if any region of the world

can be grieved at the prosperity of this empire, it assuredly can never be your Italy. And where else can private people of any condition attempt so lofty a career as here, where those born in a plebeian cradle may yet sleep in the tomb of a king? Every revolution of this government is altogether so different from the usual progress of all others, that, as to myself, struck with astonishment, I cannot conceal from thee that it has a divine fragrance. Wherefore I exult at seeing this my native land flourishing for ever, as if it were a perpetual engine, singled out by Divine Providence, for producing the most marvellous revolutions upon the face of this earth."

Scarcely had the spectre uttered these words, when he vanished amidst the myriads. These phantoms revolved around, like a cloud in a whirlwind. There issued forth from it a sound of various confused and indistinct words; some appeared to be lamenting, others shrieking, some joyful, and some in a tone of authority. But of no one was the sound quite distinct, and of all the words were at once cut short. It appeared that Tullius, in the act of vanishing, turned upon me his eyes, beaming with more than usual bene-

volence, and seemed to shew marks of grief. And I saw also, in other illustrious phantoms, a similar token of an involuntary parting. But all of them, in a short time, were dissolved into air, and I remained alone and deserted, with my eyes wandering over the starry vault of Heaven. There are yet remaining, impressed upon my senses, these grave countenances; there are still ringing in my ears their imposing voices, and their opinions are yet re-echoing through my heart. But of all those discussed in the empire of death, this, of all others, is the most deeply impressed on my mind: That the most sublime geniuses are ever accustomed to regulate all their opinions of great events with great moderation. From their nature they abhor, as a vulgar and foolish insult, all taunting in grave reasoning: nor without an honourable degree of caution, do they ever utter any opinions, when there are presented to their minds new and stupendous reasons for extraordinary and unexpected effects.

THE END.

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